

S E R M O N S

O N

Several SUBJECTS;

TO WIT,

A *Confirmation* of the TRUTH of
the Christian Religion. One Sermon.

Compel them to come in. One Sermon.

The *Christian Hero*, or the *Saints*
Victory and *Rewards*, in 6 Sermons.

By JOHN BARNARD, A. M.
PASTOR of a Church in *Marblehead*.

*And they went forth, and preached every where, the
Lord working with them, and confirming the word
with Signs following. Mark xvi. 20.*

L O N D O N:

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T O T H E
Flock in M A R B L E H E A D,

Over which the Holy Ghost hath made
me an Overseer.

Dearly Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,



Here present you with those Discourses, which so many of you have desired to be made publick: they were firstly calculated for you; and if they may in any measure assist you, and yours, in your spiritual Warfare, that you may run well and obtain the Crown, I shall not be uneasy at venturing them abroad, in an Age wherein almost every one sets himself up for a Critick.

The Subjects are weighty, and of universal Concernment. I have not placed them in the Order, in which they were first delivered to you; but so as they may best carry some Relation or Connexion.

In the First, you have the Truth of the Christian Religion, the best of Religions, confirmed; so far as a single Sermon would allow me to go

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in the Demonstration of it. It is a Matter of great importance to us all, to be well rooted in the firm Perswasion of the Truth and Reality of our Holy Religion, otherwise all our Pretensions are but vain. This leads us to the Belief of all the Doctrinal Articles of the Christian Religion, and shews us the Necessity of our practising according to all the Duties of it. Christianity, above all other Religions, has the evident Signatures of the Divinity stamped upon it, and consequently carries along with it, the Force of the Obligation we are all under to conform to its Revelations and Precepts. And may you not on'y perceive the Evidence of it in your Understandings, but, thro' Grace, so feel the Force and Power of it in your Hearts and Consciences, as that you may your selves become living Witnesses of the Truth of it.

That you may be so, I am authorised, by the great Shepherd of the Sheep, to compel you to come in to His Fold, to take His Mark and Livery upon you, to receive His Doctrines, submit to His Institutions, and to live up to the Holy Rules, which He has laid down in His Holy Word. But with what sort of Compulsion, I have endeavour'd to shew, and exemplify; not as having Dominion over your Faith, but as Helpers of your Joy. This is the Substance of the Second Sermon, in which you see the Spirit of the Gospel, and the Law of Jesus, treats us, not as mere Machines, that are to be moved only by external Force, but, as intelligent Agents, by proper Arguments addressed to our Reason and Conscience, to bring us to a
Compliance

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Compliance with our Duty, and a due Regard to our main Interest. Oh! may you all, by the Grace of God, be prevailed upon to come to the Supper of the great King, that you may feast upon that truly divine Food, which will convey eternal Life unto your Souls.

These Two Sermons have been preached at the publick Lecture in Boston, as well as to you; and at the Desire of many there, in Conjunction with yours, accompany what follows.

The Design of the Third Subject, is to shew you what it is to be a Christian indeed, and not in Profession only, and to excite you there-to by the many strong Arguments fetched from the Gospel of our Blessed Lord. By the faint Picture I have drawn of the Christian Hero, you see that there is something more, requisite to the forming of a real Christian, than the generality of the professing World is ready to imagine; and by the short Detail I have given of the glorious Rewards that belong to the Over-comer, you may discern, that it is richly worth your while to use all imaginable Pains, in an holy Struggle of Soul, to subdue inbred Lusts, and master the Temptations that you may meet with from abroad, and to transcribe the Life of Christ into your own, that you may receive the promised Blessedness, which He is gone before to prepare for all His Followers.

It will be to little purpose to acknowledge the Truth of the Christian Religion, if to your Faith in the Son of God, you do not add your Care to live up to the Vow of your Baptism, to renounce the Flesh, the World, and the Devil,
and

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and to walk in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord, blameless. For this is the Way, and this only, to become the Children of God, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The great Danger there is of making Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, from the powerful Blast of the Wicked One, and the strong Current of depraved Nature and bad Examples, renders the Subject so much the more needful. I would therefore earnestly call upon you, who are my peculiar Charge, in tender Compassion to your own Souls, that you would duely improve it to direct you in your Passage through this World, that you may at last arrive safe in those blissful Regions, where you will be out of the reach of all Storm and Danger.

May the good Spirit of God follow it with His Blessing upon you, and yours; that you and your Children may be established in the Faith, may come to the Feast of the Lord prepared for you in His House, and may live in such an universal Conformity to all the Duties of the Christian Religion, as to disappoint the Designs of your spiritual Adversaries, that you may at last have assign'd to each of you your share in the unutterable Honours and Joys of the Throne of the Lamb.

And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them that are sanctify'd.

9 JU 64

Marblehead,
Apr. 22. 1727.

JOHN BARNARD.



A Confirmation of the TRUTH of the Christian Religion.

HEBREWS II. 3.

----- *And was confirmed unto us, by them
that heard Him.*



THE great Design of the Author of this *Epistle* to the *Hebrews* is evidently to establish such of the *Jews*, as had already embraced the Christian Religion, in the sincere and steady Belief of all the Articles, and an uniform and persevering Practice of all the Duties of it ; and to persuade the rest of that Nation to lay aside their Prejudices, and become Profelytes to the Christian Faith and Manners. And because their peculiar Fondness for the Law of *Moses*, and the Rituals of the Aaronical Priesthood and Levitical Service, was the grand Prejudice upon their Minds against the Christian Institution ; which hinder'd their Subjection to the Gospel and Law of *Jesus*, and made many of them, who profess'd Christianity, but half Christians, in their still retaining the Observation of some of the *Mosaic* Ceremonies ; therefore the Apostle levels the main of his Discourse at the Removal of this Obstacle out of the way.

Hence

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Hence it is, that throughout the whole of his Epistle he makes a Comparison between the *Jewish* and the *Christian* Religion; and labours to convince them, by very plain and obvious Reasoning, how much the Christian Religion goes beyond the Jewish, in the Dignity of its Author, the Excellency of its Priesthood, and the Validity of its Sacrifices; and, that in these Regards, the whole of the *Mosaic Pedagogue* was but a typical Representation, as by a faint Shadow, of that greater Excellency, which now appeared in its full Light by the coming of *Jesus Christ*, and by that holy Religion of which He is the Head and Author.

Since then, the Religion of *Moses* received its greatest Value from the special Reference it had to the Religion of *Jesus*, and is so far excelled in Dignity, and Perspicuity, by the Christian Institution (as a Type ever receives its Value from, and is exceeded by the Thing Typified); it would therefore be no Dishonour to *Moses* their ancient Law-giver, and it was highly reasonable, from the Nature of things, for them now to give up their Fondness for that Religion, which their Nation had been so long in the Possession of, and come over to the Christian Religion, and abide steadfast in the Possession and Practice of it; as being the clearest and last Revelation, which ever God intended to make of His Mind and Worship unto His Church in the World.

This seems to be the Force of the Apostle's Reasoning throughout this Epistle; in the Prosecution whereof, he intersperses various Motives, to excite and stir them up to an hearty embracing of the Christian Religion; among which, the Passage whereto my Text belongs, may well be looked upon as one. For having, in the former Chapter, purposely shewed them the Dignity and Authority of *Jesus Christ*, by whom God hath spoken to us in these last days, as the Son of God, and Lord of Angels, and therefore Superior to *Moses*; he infers the Necessity of their hearkening to Him, and receiving His Doctrine, from the Consideration, that a more dreadful Punishment will be inflicted upon them for the Neglect
of

of what *He* has spoken, than for their Disobedience to *Moses's* Law. Verse 2, 3. *For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord.* That is; If they refused to submit to the Christian Religion, and live according to the Articles and Duties of it, which God has made known to the World by *His Son*, the Head and Lord of the Church, as the only Way unto Salvation; they might look for a more certain and terrible Punishment, than if they should live in the Neglect of *Moses's* Law, which was given by the Ministration of Angels; which yet God often punished, even in this World, those that were disobedient to, in a very awful manner, as a just Recompence of Reward.

But lest any should be ready to * object, and say, they had never seen *Jesus*, nor heard Him speak; or had not sufficient Certainty of the Truth of the *Christian* Religion, as they had of the Religion of *Moses*; and therefore were not to be blamed, if they did not believe and practise what they saw no grounds for; the Apostle therefore adds, in the Words of my Text, *and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him.*

All the Doctrines which *Jesus Christ* has revealed, and all the Duties which he has required (that is, the whole of the Christian Religion) are confirmed unto us by them that heard Him. The Word here used for Confirmed (*ἐσχατάω*) signifies a being *made sure*†; and so it denotes the utmost Certainty, such as leaves no rational Grounds to hesitate or doubt of the Truth of the Thing. Thus the Christian Religion, even to those who have not had the Advantage of setting under the personal Ministry of *Jesus*, is confirmed, and made infallibly certain, by those that heard Him; so that no Man

can

* Dr. Owen, in Loc.

† 2 Pet. 1. 19. Made firm and stedfast, being delivered infallibly unto us by the Ministry of the Apostles. Dr. Owen, *ubi supra*.

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can reasonably desire fuller and clearer Evidence to the Truth of it, than what we already have. This therefore is the Point of Doctrine, which by Divine Assistance, I shall speak a little to from these Words.

That the Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation, given to the Truth and Certainty of it, that can reasonably be required.

In discoursing on which, I shall

I. Shew, what I intend by the Christian Religion. And then

II. Prove, that it has the utmost Confirmation given to the Certainty of it, that can reasonably be required.

Here then I am

I. To shew, *what I intend by the Christian Religion.*

Now by the Christian Religion I would be understood to mean, *The whole of that Religion which has been taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, as contained in our Bible.*

I say, *the whole of that Religion*; whether respecting Matters of Faith and Doctrine, as peculiar Revelations from God, what we are to know and believe; or respecting the practical Duties of Religion, either in the religious Observation of the Rites, Ordinances and Laws relating to the House and Worship of God, or the Duties of the Moral Life; or finally, including in it the better Hope which we look for beyond the Grave, as the Reward annexed to a Life of pure and undefiled Religion. These, and all the Appendages, thereof are intended by the Christian Religion. For so far as any Part hereof is wanting in our Profession and Practice, so far we are defective in our Religion, and do not observe the whole of what is required of us.

I say, *the Religion taught us by Jesus Christ, and His Apostles*; because it cannot be supposed, that when I am speaking of the Christian Religion, I should designedly mean any Religion but that which has JESUS CHRIST for the Author of it. For this would be to introduce another Religion, distinct from the Christian, which would require another Denomination from him who is the
Founder

Founder of it; as the *Mosaic*, the *Papal*, and the *Mahometan* are denominated from their several Founders. I mean therefore whatsoever *Jesus Christ* hath taught us; either personally, in the Days of His Ministry on Earth, or by His Apostles, who were inspired with the Gift of the Holy Ghost from Him, by which they were infallibly guided and directed in all the Doctrines and Instructions, which they communicated to the World.

And I say, as contained in our Bible; partly, because (tho' it is the professed Design of the New Testament to give us a full and clear Revelation of the Christian Religion in all the Duties of it; yet) in as much as the Jewish Religion, as to their Faith, Morality and Hope, was Essentially the same with the Christian, tho' Circumstantially different (as I shall shew more plainly afterwards); therefore a Proof fetch'd from the Old Testament, in any of theſe respects, that has not some peculiar Reference to their Ceremonial Worship and Typical Ordinances, is as good an Evidence of the Christian Religion, as a Text out of the New: And partly, because I would exclude all Writers since the Apostles Days, whether ancient or modern, from introducing any one Article into the Christian Religion, whether in Matters of Faith, Worship, or Manners. For so would I call no Man, Master.

So that by the Christian Religion I intend the Religion of *Jesus*, the whole Religion of *Jesus*, and nothing but the Religion of *Jesus*. And therefore, as the great Dr. *Tillotson* admirably well expresses it, whose Words are well worth our Observation, * “ It is not the doubtful and uncertain Traditions of Men; nor the partial Dictates and Doctrines of any Church, since the primitive Times, which are not contained in the Holy Scriptures and the ancient Creeds of the Christian Church, but have been since declared and imposed upon

* In his Posthumous Works, 4th Edit. Vol. I. p. 149, 150. on *Heb.* 10. 23.

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“ upon the Christian World ; tho’ with never so confident a Pretence of Antiquity in the Doctrines, and of
 “ Infallibility in the Proposers of them : These are no
 “ part of that Faith, which we are either to profess, or
 “ to hold fast : because --- that Church which proposeth
 “ them hath no more Claim to Infallibility, than all other
 “ parts of the Christian Church ; which since the
 “ Apostles Time is none at all. In a word, no other
 “ Doctrines which are not sufficiently revealed in Scripture,
 “ either in express Terms, or by plain and necessary
 “ Consequence ; nor any Rites of Worship, nor
 “ Matters of Practice, which are not contained in Scripture,
 “ are to be esteemed any part of that Faith in Religion,
 “ the Profession whereof the Apostle here commands all
 “ Christians to hold fast without wavering.”
 Thus he.

II. I am now to prove, *That the Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation given to the Truth and Certainty of it, that can reasonably be required.*

But before I enter upon the Proof of this Proposition, it will be fitting to observe, that the Christian Religion deriving its Original from God (and that not barely as all the Works of Men may be said to be from God, who hath furnished the humane Nature with its rational Faculties, and upholds and governs, by His Providence, those Faculties in their Exercise ; but) by immediate Inspiration from Him ; therefore the Evidence of the Truth thereof must necessarily turn upon such Testimony, as is sufficiently sure and certain. For a Matter that is intirely dependent upon supernatural Revelation, as to our Knowledge and Belief of it, is not to be proved by a Deduction from natural Principles ; as a Problem of the Mathematicks is to be demonstrated : But yet if the Testimony to a Divine Revelation be sufficiently full and clear, it has all the Force to determine our Minds to the Belief and Practice of the thing revealed, that any Mathematical Demonstration can have, to sway our Reason to conclude the Certainty of any
 Proposition

Proposition in Science, so established from Natural Principles. For so far as Miracles are concerned in proving the Certainty of a Divine Revelation, they bring the Evidence home, not only to our reasonable Mind, but to our very Senses; which is as far as any Demonstration can go.

If then the Testimony to the Truth of the Christian Religion be sufficiently full and clear, it has the utmost Confirmation that can reasonably be required; for it has all the Evidence that the Nature of the thing can admit of, and such as amounts to the Force of a Demonstration: And surely he must be one that governs himself, not by Reason, but by Humour and Caprice, that desires more; and all his Wranglings against it are as little to be regarded, as the empty Talk of him that should hotly dispute against the whole's being greater than the part.

And that the Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation given to it, that can reasonably be desired, is what I am now to prove; and this I shall endeavour to do, by shewing that it has the fullest and clearest Testimony to the Truth of its Doctrines, its Precepts, and its Rewards; under which I comprehend the whole of the Christian Religion.

First then, The Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation given to the Truth and Certainty of its *Doctrines*. By the Doctrines of the Christian Religion I mean, all those Articles which are revealed to us as Objects of our Faith; and which we are to believe because of the Confirmation given to them.

It is true, the Doctrines of the Christian Religion contain many things in them, hard to be understood; such Mysteries as our Senses cannot discern, nor our Reason understand: Yet is there such full and clear Evidence of the Certainty of them, that we have all imaginable Reason to believe them; and as little room left to doubt the Truth of them, as we have to doubt the Truth of the Existence of our own Bodies, the nature of whose Constitution, and the Manner of whose Existence we so little understand.

The

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The Doctrinal Articles of the Christian Religion (as I hinted before) are essentially the same with those of the Jewish, and are as old as the Days of *Adam*: That is to say, It was required of them under the Old Testament Dispensation, not on'y to believe in One God, the Maker of all things, but in the Messiah, thro' whom they were to obtain the Pardon of their Sins, the Resurrection of their Bodies, a Restoration to the Divine Favour, and a State of eternal Happiness; and thither all their Sacrifices pointed them; and in this lies the Sum and Substance of the Doctrines of the Christian Religion; with this Difference between the Christian and the Jewish, that their Faith was in a Messiah to come, the Christians in a Messiah already come; they had but a more dark Manifestation of things, being as under a Veil, the Christian has a more full and clear one, in the brighter Light of the Gospel Dispensation. This is plainly evident to any one that is conversant in reading the Bible.

Now instead of the many Arguments that might be used, I will chuse to put the Demonstration (for so I will venture to call it) of the Truth of the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, upon Two such Heads of arguing, as seem to me to amount to the utmost Certainty that can reasonably be required; namely, the Certainty of the Bible's being the Word of God, and the Certainty of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead.

1. The Doctrines of the Christian Religion have the utmost Confirmation given to them, in the full and clear Testimony we have of *the Bible's being the Word of God*. By the Bible's being the Word of God I mean, that what is contained in that Book, called the Bible, is all of it, either from the immediate Inspiration of God, or from His special Guidance and Direction of those who were the Amanuenses and Penmen of the Sacred Scriptures; and so it is all to be looked upon as His Word, because coming from Him, and by His Authority, and therefore

therefore an infallible Rule to us in all Matters of Faith and Practice.

Now it is very plain, that if our Bible be thus the Word of God, then the Doctrines and Articles contained therein, do all originally come from Him, and therefore of consequence they must needs be all of them infallibly true; because *the Lord is a God of Truth* *, with whom *it is impossible that he should lye* †. So that there is more room to doubt the Evidence of our Senses, and the Certainty of the Conclusions of our Reason, than the Veracity of Him who is Truth itself; because it is possible for these to deceive us, but it is altogether impossible that Truth should. If therefore it be sufficiently evident that our Bible is from God, as the Author of it, this gives us the utmost Confirmation of the Truth of the Christian Religion, as to all the Doctrinal Articles thereof; because all the Doctrines of the Christian Religion are contained in that Holy Book, and we pretend to account no other Doctrines so, but what are to be found there.

Now we have the fullest and clearest Evidence to the Bible's being the Word of God, that possibly can be had, from the concurrent Testimony of the Penmen of it, and from the Miracles which they wrought to confirm their Testimony.

Thus the Writers and Prophets of the Old Testament ever came to the People with a *Thus saith the Lord*, even from *Moses* down to the latest of them; and the Penmen of the New Testament do as fully testify to their having received their Revelation from God. Our Blessed Lord Himself, who came down from Heaven, assures us, that He spake not of Himself, but what His Father had given Him in Commandment, that He spake, and made known unto the World ||. And the Apostles of our Lord were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, in what they penned, and left upon Record, as the Articles of our Faith and

* *Deut.* 32. 4.

† *Heb.* 6. 18.

|| *John* 12. 49. 15. 15.

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and the great Doctrines of Christianity: They assure us, as the Apostle *Peter* in his second Epistle, ch. I. 20, 21. *That no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not, in old time, by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Now the universal Consent and Agreement of all the Penmen of the Holy Scriptures, who lived in different Ages, and Places of the World; and all of them well known, and reputed for good and holy Men in their Day, such as the People, among whom they lived, never found any just occasion to condemn for their Morals; I say, the Agreement of all of these, in their Testimony, that they received what they taught the World, from God; and the constant Harmony and Accord in their several Revelations; and the very Nature, End and Design of their Doctrines being so plainly adapted, to cultivate and improve Mankind in their best Interests, to enlarge their Minds, to better their Society, to lead them to a more suitable Awe and Reverence of the Deity, and train them up to an Eternal Life; this amounts to a very strong and convincing Evidence, that the Testimony of these Men is true, and that they have not taught us cunningly devised Fables, but the Words of the God of Truth.

For it was impossible they should enter into a designed Combination, and Agreement to impose upon the World; the Distance of the Ages, and Places, in which they lived, utterly forbids that. And the Sublimity of the Truths they revealed, the Elegancy of their Style, and the Coherence of their Doctrines, as fully forbids their being either Fools or Madmen. And the Majesty and Purity, the extraordinary Reverence of the Divine Being, and the great Detestation of all that is vile and sinful, and Recommendation of all that is virtuous and laudable, which, like a self-evidencing Light, runs thro' the whole of their Doctrines and Revelations, as strongly assures us, that they could not be Men Knaveish and False. So that from this Consideration, we have as full and clear Testimony, that their Doctrines came from
Heaven,

Heaven, as they have told us they did, as we have to the Truth of any one thing, in the whole known World, that is dependent upon Testimony ; and therefore have as strong reason to credit and believe the Truth of their Revelations, as we can have to believe the Truth of any thing that any Number of well known honest Men shall affirm to us ; that is to say, all the reason that can be desired in a Matter depending upon human Testimony. And then if we call to mind, how many of the Penmen of the Sacred Scripture sealed their Testimony with their Blood, offering their Lives a Sacrifice for the Confirmation of the Doctrines which they taught ; which we cannot suppose any Men in their Wits would do, in case they knew what they affirmed was False, and that their Lives would readily have been given them for a Prey, if they would but speak what they knew to be True, in unsaying the Falshoods they had before uttered ; it leaves no room for us to call in question the Integrity of the Men, or doubt the Truth and Certainty of the Testimony they have given us.

But then, if we add to this the Consideration of their foretelling Futurities, which had their exact Accomplishments ; and especially the many Miracles which they wrought in the sight of many Witnesses, to confirm the Doctrines which they taught to the World ; it puts it beyond all rational Doubt, that the Sacred Scripture is truly the Word of God ; [because this is a Divine Testimony added to a very full and clear human one.] For the doing of those things that exceed the Power of Nature is an Evidence, to our very Senses, of the Concurrence of a Divine Almighty Power ; which is the utmost Confirmation that can possibly be given to the Truth and Certainty of any thing's being revealed from God : Because the Divinity speaks plainly to our Senses by His Works, at the same time that He speaks to our Understanding by His Prophets ; and thereby gives the highest Proof, that it is God Himself speaking in and by His Ministers. And therefore the Apostle adds, in the Verse immediately following my Text, *God also*

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bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost.

So that here is in these things, which I have but hinted, the fullest and clearest Proof that can be, of the Sacred Scripture's being the Word of God; and consequently the utmost Confirmation, that can reasonably be required, of the Truth of all the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, which are contained in that Holy Word. But

2. The Doctrines of the Christian Religion have the utmost Confirmation given to them, by the full and clear Testimony which we have to the *Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead.*

When Jesus Christ came into the World, He pretended to be the promised Messiah of God, sent from Heaven to make further Discoveries of the Divine Mind and Will unto the World, and to be the only Saviour of Sinners; and therefore He preached not only Repentance, but the Necessity of Faith in Him, that *whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life**; and that *if the world would not believe in Him, they should dye in their sins*†; and accordingly, He gave it in Commission to His Apostles, and to His Ministers after them, to preach in His Name, *He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned*||. He also took upon Him to be the Head of the Church of God in the World; and as such, to abolish the old Aaronical Priesthood, and Levitical Services, and to introduce the Christian Oeconomy, in all the Parts of it; and to give Laws to His Church, in appointing Officers, establishing Rites and significant Ceremonies in the Worship of God, and directing to the good Order and Government of His Church.

Now, if this was no more than an assumed Power and Authority, and what He really had no Right to; if He was not truly what He pretended to be, it is very

* *John* 3. 16.

† *John* 8. 24.

|| *Mark* 16. 16.

ry certain, that the whole Christian Scheme falls to the Ground of course. But if He was truly the promised Messiah, the Son of God, and sent from Him; and was really invested with the Power and Authority in the Church of God which He pretended to; then the Christian Religion is most certainly True, in all the Parts of it. For it is all derived from Jesus Christ, as the Author of it; and we pretend to no other Christian Religion but what is founded by, and results from Him.

Now, besides the many Miracles which Jesus Christ wrought for the Confirmation of His Mission and Doctrine (which, as I have already said, in conjunction with the Holiness and Purity of the Doctrines, are the fullest and clearest Evidence that can be given to a Divine Revelation; all of which are as strong Proofs of the Truth of what Jesus Christ has taught us, as the Miracles wrought by the Penmen of the Holy Scriptures, are a Proof that they were sent by God; I say, besides this,) Jesus Christ put the Truth and Certainty, of His being really what He pretended to be, upon this Issue; namely, His Resurrection from the Dead. For when the *Scribes and Pharisees* asked of Him a Sign (something evidently beyond the Power of Nature, and yet plainly evident to their Senses) to prove the Truth of His Doctrine, that they might believe on Him, He said to them in *Matth. xii. 39.* *An evil and adulterous generation seek after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for, says he, ver. 40. as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* Which was a plain putting the whole Certainty of His Mission and Doctrine upon this single Point, of His Resurrection from the Dead within three Days, as an infallible Proof and Evidence that He was no Impostor, but truly sent from God under the Character He assumed; and that He had Power and Authority to teach what He did, and make such Changes in the Worship of God, as He was about to make.

And indeed, it could not well have been put upon a more certain and determinate Issue. For it is certain, that nothing short of an Almighty Power could raise from the Dead; because it is equally impossible to any merely natural Agent, or second Cause, to unite a living Soul to a dead Carcase, and animate that Body with a new Life, as to unite the Soul to those Particles of Matter, and enliven that Body at the first. For the *Vinculum* between Soul and Body being broken by Death, no Power inferior to that which was necessary to put that Bond upon them at the first, can cement it again, or give a new one to them: That is to say, nothing short of a creating Power is sufficient here for; for he that can unite a Soul and Body, and make a living Man, must have a Power to create at His Pleasure.

And it is as certain, that if this Divine Power should be exerted, to raise Him from the Dead, as He said, then there would be no room left to question the Truth of what He affirmed; because such a Miracle would be the highest Evidence that could be desired, that He really was what He pretended to be, and that all His Doctrines were true. And on the other hand, that if He had been an Impostor, and had assumed the Name and Authority of God to gain Credit to a Doctrine of Lyes, the Divine Power would never have shewn Itself so far engaged in His Favour, as to raise Him from the Dead. For it cannot be supposed, that God would exert His Almighty Power on purpose to gain Credit to a Falshood; because this would be at once to make God a Lyar, and to destroy the Foundation of the fullest and clearest Evidence we can have of a Divine Revelation, and so for ever leave the World under an Impossibility of coming to any Certainty about the Mind and Will of God. It therefore follows, that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead was such a convincing Sign, as carried its full Evidence with it, and left no room to hesitate about the Truth of the Thing, which it was given as a Sign of. If therefore *Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, as the Apostle argues, 1 Cor. xv. 17.* But if Christ be
risen

risen indeed, then we have all imaginable reason to believe His Doctrine.

Now it is as certain that our Blessed Lord rose from the Dead, at the Time appointed, as any thing of that nature possibly can be. For this, being a Matter of Fact, has as full and clear Testimony given in to the Truth of it, as any Fact has, or can have ; and therefore is as incontestably confirmed as in reason can be desired.

That our Lord was put to Death, there is no room to doubt ; because it was an Affair in which all His Enemies were concerned, and was transacted before the *Roman* Governour, the whole Body of the Council of the *Jews*, in the face of all the People, and before the Sun.

And as little reason is there to doubt the Certainty of His rising from the Dead. For this is confirmed to us by the concurrent Testimony of His Apostles, to whom He not only appeared more privately after his Resurrection, and gave them the fullest Proof, that He was not a Spectre, but the very same Body which had been crucified, raised to Life again ; by His conversing with them, eating with them, and their handling of His Flesh and Bones ; so that the most strong and powerful of their Senses were convinced of the Reality of it ; but He was also openly *seen of above five hundred at a time* *. Thus He gave infallible Proofs of His Resurrection, *in being seen, and conversing with them for forty days together.*

Now how impossible it is, that a thing so well known, and testified to by so many Witnesses, should be a Cheat and Falshood, is easily seen, if we reduce it to our own Times. For should any Number of Men agree never so much, to make Report of a particular Person's being raised from the dead, whom we all knew to have been truly dead ; if the Report were not true in fact, how easy wou'd it be for innumerable Persons to convince them of the Forgery ? And should they attempt to publish the History of the Resurrection of such an One ;

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* 1 Cor. 15: 6.

how many would there be, that would look upon themselves obliged to undeceive the World, and shew the Falseness of their Accounts? especially if we consider, that so great a Matter as the Welfare of our Church and State (and therefore what every Man would look upon himself as concerned in) very much depended upon the Certainty or Falshood of the Fact. So that this Consideration, together with the unquestionable Veracity of the Apostles, (whom we have before proved to be true Men) renders it incontestably evident, that Jesus Christ is truly risen from the dead, according as He said.

But besides His very Enemies, those that were the chief Council and Agents in the putting our Lord to Death, have given a strong Testimony to the World of the Truth of His Resurrection, by the poor pitiful Shift they were forced to, that they might blind the Eyes of the People. For after that they had taken all imaginable Care to secure the Sepulchre in which He was laid, by sealing the Stone, and setting a Watch, so that there might be no Juggling and Tricking in the Matter; yet, when, at the Time appointed, our Lord rose from the Dead, they looked upon themselves as necessitated to call the grand Council together, and as the wise Result of their grave Debates, instead of punishing the Guards for sleeping (if they had really slept as was pretended) when they had so great and important an Affair, wherein the Welfare of their whole Nation was concerned, committed to their Trust; they meanly hire them to report this self-evident Falshood, that *his disciples came by night, and stole him away while they slept*, and engaged to secure them from any Marks of Displeasure from the Roman Governour, for their insufferable Negligence. The History whereof, we have in the latter End of St. *Matthew's* Gospel. This poor simple Story, designed to prevent the People from believing on Him (by so strong a Confirmation of His Mission and Doctrine, as that of His Resurrection from the Dead) is, in all the Parts of it, so palpably false, and looks so much like tricking and imposing upon the World, that it does but in reality add to the
Strength

Strength of His Disciples Testimony to the Matter of Fact, that He is risen indeed.

Now since the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, has such an abundant Testimony to the Truth of it ; His very Enemies also being a strong Evidence to every Man's Conscience, tho' they meant not so ; it plainly follows that we have the utmost Confirmation of the Doctrines of the Christian Religion. For since He laid the Stress of the Obligation, the Jews and the whole World were under to believe in Him, upon this single Point, of His rising from the Dead ; and since it is impossible that He should be raised from the Dead, but by a Divine Almighty Power, which could not be manifested to gain Credit to a Falshood ; and since it is evident, that He really is risen from the Dead ; it necessarily follows, that He was no Impostor, but really sent from God, and had Power and Authority to teach His Doctrines, and make His Alterations in the Church of God : And therefore that all the Articles of the Christian Faith, which are taught us by Christ and His Apostles, have the utmost Confirmation given to the Truth of them, that can reasonably be desired. For God would never have released Him from the Prison of the Grave, if the Religion which He taught had not been the true Religion, and every way agreeable to the Mind and Will of God.

And by the way I would observe, that these things, which I have mentioned, not only prove the Truth of the Doctrinal Articles of the Christian Faith ; but the whole of the Christian Religion, in all the Parts of it : And therefore I shall but more briefly name what remains.

2. I am to shew, that the Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation given to the Truth of its *Precepts*. Under this I comprehend all Moral Precepts, and Instituted Religion.

As to the Duties of *Morality*, these were in the general the same, under the *Mosaic* Dispensation ; which therefore the *Jews* were obliged to observe (as is evident

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dent from the Decalogue) as well as the Christian; only our Blessed Saviour, the great Lawgiver to His Church, has, in the Days of the Gospel, further explained and refined this Law of *Moses*, and shewed us our further Obligation to observe it, from His own Illustrious Example.

Now as to the Truth of these Moral Precepts, or their being what God requires of us; what I have already said, under the former Head, sufficiently confirms it. For besides the inferring them more generally from the Light of Natural Conscience, which is as the Voice of God, those who have published and required these Duties of Mankind, have evidenced their being sent of God, by the Miracles which they wrought. And if the Sacred Scripture be the Word of God (which we have proved) then all the Moral Duties required therein are truly from Him. And all the Saints, upon Sacred Record, have given in their Testimony to these, expressing their *Esteem for the Law of God, above Gold, yea, above fine Gold*; and have made it their great Care to conform their whole Life to them; so that as the Word of God has taught them, they have *denied all ungodliness and worldly lust, and have lived soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*

And indeed we have full Conviction to our own Consciences, that our Bible contains the wisest, and every way the most serviceable and advantageous Body of Laws, and Rules of Holy Living, that are to be found in the whole World; no other Religion giving to Mankind such wholesome and pure Laws, for the Service and Adoration of God, in Works of Piety and Devotion; and an universal Philanthropy and Beneficence to Mankind, in Works of Justice and Charity; and teaches us so effectually how to govern our Appetites and Passions, so as to preserve ourselves free from Injuriousness to our Fellow-Creatures, and to possess our own Minds in Calmness and Serenity.

But then, as to the Duties of *Instituted Religion*, or the Worship of God in His House, and the Affairs of the
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the Government thereof, herein lies the grand Characteristick, and distinguishing Mark, between the *Jewish* and the *Christian* Religion; saving that of a more open and avowed Subjection to Jesus Christ, the promised *Messiah*, as already come into the World.

Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church, has abolished all the ancient *Jewish* Ceremonies, and the manner of their Religious Worship, the several Officers in their Church, and the Form of their Government; and in the Room thereof has instituted, what is called, the Christian Church, and Worship, and Religion. For the whole *Jewish* Oeconomy being to continue no longer, than till He, unto whom they all pointed, was come in the Flesh to put an End to Offerings and Sacrifices for Sin, by the Offering of Himself once for all; upon His Offering of His Body a propitiatory Sacrifice, they all of necessity ceased, as to the Obligation the *Jews* were under to observe them; and therefore there was necessarily a Change in their Manner of Worship, in their Priesthood, their Order and Government. And this it is very much the Design of the *Apostle* to shew at large in this his Epistle to the *Hebrews*.

But then the *Old* manner of the Worship of God being altered, it is of necessity that a *New* Frame and Model be instituted in the room thereof; that the Church of God may not be left wholly to the Influence of their natural Light, and become a Prey to designing and crafty Men. And accordingly Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, has instituted a New Model of Worship and Form of Government in the House of God. Besides directing us to Prayers, Reading, Exhortation, and Singing of Psalms, which are Parts of Natural Worship; He has appointed Two, and but Two significant Ceremonies in the Worship of God, as the Badges of the Christian Profession, namely, the Holy Ordinance of *Baptism*, and the *Supper of the Lord*. He has also appointed His ordinary Officers in His Church, viz. *Pastors* or *Teachers*, whose proper Work and Business 'tis to teach and instruct His People, to explain the great Doctrines of the Gospel.

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Gospel, and exhort and persuade Men to a willing Subjection to Him in all things; these are also often stiled *Bishops* in the *Epistles*, as denoting their Oversight and Rule over the Flock: And to these He has added *Deacons*, to be Helps and Assistants to His Ministers in the Management of the external Affairs of the Church, and in their Care of serving Tables. He has further left to His Church His Orders and Directions, with respect to the Manner of their *Government* or *Discipline* in the general; as particularly in *Matth. xviii. 15.*----

These things lie all plain before any observant Reader, in the Gospels and Epistles; so that Christ has taught us the Form and Fashion of His House, the Order and Government thereof: Nor know I of any other Form of Worship, Rites and Ceremonies, Officers and Discipline, as belonging to the *Christian* Church by the Appointment of Christ or His Apostles, than what I have named. And all of these have the utmost Confirmation given to the Truth and Certainty of their being from Christ, in that they are all to be found in the Writings of those Men who were infallibly inspired by the Holy Spirit, and who have confirmed the Truth of what they affirmed by their Miracles; which is the highest Evidence of a Doctrine or Duty's coming from God that can be, as we have already shewed. And it is with a particular Reference to the Frame and Constitution of the *Christian* Religion, as contradistinct to the *Jewish* in the outward Form, that the Apostle largely discourses in this Epistle, and shews the Necessity of a Change, since the great Antitype is come, and exhorts the believing *Hebrews*, to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering*. So that I need to add no more here in the Proof of this Head; but may pass to say,

3. The Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation given to the Truth and Certainty of its Rewards.

Thus

* *Heb. 10. 23.*

Thus we have Assurance of the *present* Rewards of a Life of Religion. This is very plain in the large Promises made to the *Jewish* Church. And hence we find the holy *Psalmist* testifying hereto from his own Experience, that *in keeping of them* (that is, the Commands of God) *there is great reward* *; and *great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them* †. And his Son *Solomon* assures us, *Prov. iii. 15. --- that the merchandise thereof is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour; her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her.* And such Temporal Promises are made also under the *Gospel* Dispensation: Hence our Saviour said, *Matth. vi. 33. All these things shall be added unto you;* and the Apostle tells us, *1 Tim. iv. 8. Godliness has the promise of the life that now is.* But these Temporal Rewards are left more *sub Judice*, and are dispensed when, and how, and to whom it seems good unto the infinitely wise God.

Whereas the *Future* Reward, which is the Christian's Hope, is abundantly more sure and certain. This the *Jews* had some weaker Discovery of, but the *Christians* a more full and plain one. The endless State of Glory and Happiness in the heavenly World, the Resurrection of our Bodies to immortal Life, to live with Christ for ever, beholding and partaking of His Glory; this is all of it confirmed to us by the Hope of the Fathers, *who died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them and embraced them.* This the Holy Apostle *Paul* triumphs in the Prospect of ||. This is confirmed to us by the Visits which sometimes it has pleased God to admit his Servants to make thither, as *St. Paul* (*); and the open Vision which
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* *Pf. 19. 11* † *Pf. 119. 165.* || *2 Cor. 5. 1, and 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.* (*) *2 Cor. 12. 4.*

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some have had of that Glory, as *Stephen* * ; by all the Apostles in their Gospels and Epistles ; by the Mouth of our Saviour, and by the Oath of God ; all of which are recorded in the Sacred Pages.

Now the Glory and Happiness, which the Christian hopes for in the other World, being all of it, in express Terms, found in that Holy Book which we have proved to be the Word of God ; and the whole of the Christian Religion, and this Hope as part of it, further evidenced by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead (which we have also seen) ; this gives us the utmost Confirmation that any Man can in Reason desire, of the Truth and Certainty of this glorious Hope and Reward.

Thus I have gone as far as I intended under this Doctrine, in shewing what is meant by the Christian Religion, and in proving that it has the utmost Confirmation given to the Truth and Certainty of it, that can reasonably be required. I shall proceed therefore to make some *Application* of this unto our selves. And

1. Hence we may infer what strong Grounds we have for our *Thankfulness* to God, that we are born, and brought up within the Pale of the Christian Church. For if the Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation given to it, it must then needs be our great Advantage to be instructed in the Principles and Duties of it, and be enlightened and comforted with the glorious Hope of eternal Life. Because by this means we are directed how we may become Blessings in the World, and Happy for ever after Death. For no other Religion is sufficient to give Men the necessary Rules of a regular and well-ordered Conversation ; and much less, the good Hope of eternal Life in another and better World. All the various Hypotheses and Schemes, which the Inventors of the different sorts of Religion have laid down to their Followers, have left wide Gaps in Moral Virtue ;
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* *Acts* 7. 56.

and much more short have they come of affording any satisfactory Account of the future State, and laying any solid Foundation for a good Hope, that it shall be well with them when they dye and leave this World. Yea, so far have the various Religions of the World (all but the *Jewish* in their Day) been from laying any sure Foundation for the Happiness of Men here, or hereafter, that they have missed it in the very first Principle; and either have had no Notion at all of the True God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; or, if they have had some faint Ideas of a Supreme Being, they have been in the dark as to His Nature and Perfections, and much more so as to His Mind and Will, and the Manner of appeasing His Anger, and obtaining His Favour.

But now the Christian Religion gives us the only satisfactory Account of the Being and Perfections of God, and in what Way we may become interess'd in Him who is the Supreme Good, and in the Enjoyment of whose Favour the whole Happiness of Man consisteth. This leads us to the Mediator, the Incarnate Son of God, thro' whom God is reconciling a guilty World unto Himself. And it gives us the best and truest Rules to direct us in the faithful Discharge of all the Duties which we owe to our Creator, to our Fellow-Creatures, and to ourselves; and that in a clearer and plainer Light, than in the Time of the *Jewish* Dispensation. Since therefore we are not left to grope in the dark, as the rest of Mankind are, who are destitute of the Christian Religion, but have the clear Revelation of the Mind and the Will of God to us, and 'tis our Privilege that unto *us* are committed the Oracles of God, and these incontestibly proved to be from Him; we may see that we are under very great Obligations to Gratitude and Thankfulness to God, that He has been pleased to *make known His word unto us, and shewed us His statutes and judgments, when he hath not dealt so by every nation.*

And so much the stronger still are *our* Obligations to Thankfulness, if we consider our peculiar Advantage above many that make Profession of the Christian Religion,

gion. For while the whole *Papal* Christian World, in the general, has the Word of God, which contains the Christian Religion, kept from them, and it is a sealed Book to them; so that they cannot see the Confirmation given to the Christian Religion, nor what are the Articles of the Christian Faith, which they are to believe; or what is that Worship, as to the Manner and Form of it, which God requires of them; but are forced to see with other Men's Eyes, and believe and practise as their Priests shall teach them, whether it be conformable to the Word of God or no: *We* have the whole Christian Religion, with the evident Confirmation of it, lying plain and open before us, in the Holy Bible; which, if it be not our own Fault, is in every one of our own Hands, that we may read the whole of it, and see with our own Eyes the Light and Evidence of our Holy Religion, and judge for our selves, without the crafty Impositions of Men, what are the Articles of Faith we are to believe, and what are the Duties and Rites of Religious Worship which we are to observe, in order to our pleasing God and finding Acceptance with Him. So that in Gratitude we are obliged, above others, to make the Holy Word of God the Rule of our Walk, in all things pertaining to Life and Godliness.

2. Hence we may infer, what Reason we have to *believe all the Articles of the Christian Religion, and conform to all the Duties of Instituted Worship.*

Thus with respect to *the Articles of the Christian Faith*: For if the Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation given to it that can reasonably be desired, in the full and clear Evidence of the Sacred Scripture's being the Word of God, and of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead; then we have all imaginable Reason for our Faith of every Article of our Holy Religion, revealed to us in the Divine Oracles; tho' we may not be able to understand the mysterious Truth contained in that Revelation, or comprehend how such a thing can be. For wide is the Difference between the Reason of our Faith, or why we believe such an Article; and the Reason

son of the thing revealed to us, as the Object of our Faith. The Reason of our Faith is, the full and clear Evidence we have of the Truth, and not our Knowledge or Understanding the *Ratio* and *Modus*, the Nature and Manner of the Thing revealed to us. Tho' we are to act as reasonable Creatures, in insisting upon a full and clear Evidence of the Revelation's coming from God, as the Reason why we believe it; and may improve our Reason in searching into the Nature of the Thing revealed, so far as God has given us Light in His Holy Word to direct us in our Enquiries; yet we are not to make our understanding the Nature of the Truth revealed to us, or our reconciling it either to such precarious or solid Principles as we have treasured up in our Minds, any part of the Reason of our Faith of it. For to ground our Faith upon our understanding the Nature of the Object, is to convert our Faith into Reason.

The Object of Faith, strictly speaking, is not what we understand, but what we see a clear and full Evidence of the Truth of; tho' it may contain such Mysteries in it as we can never bring down to our Capacities, or have any clear and distinct Notions about, as to the Nature and *Ratio* of them. And it is by no means a safe Rule, to reject a Revelation which has the fullest Evidence given to the Truth of it, purely because we cannot reconcile the Nature or Manner of it to our Reason; for by this Rule we must reject, as false and absurd, a thousand things that are every day evident to our Senses. Tho' we are not of such large Capacities, as to comprehend all things knowable, yet we may safely venture to trust an infinitely Wise and Holy God, that He will never reveal any thing to His People, and require their Belief of it, that is in itself a Contradiction; however we are not able to reconcile it to some of our Beloved Principles.

Hence it was, that the *Bereans* are commended (*Acts* xvii. 11.) because *they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things* (which had been taught them) *were so.* They did not sum up all their natural and acquired Principles,

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ciples, and bring the Revelation to a Tryal by them; that they might receive it if it were agreeable to them, or reject it if they were not able to reconcile it to them; but *they searched the Scriptures to see if those things were so*; that is, to see if the pretended Revelation was plainly to be found in that Holy Word, and so to have the full Assurance that it was truly revealed from God; and then they *received the Revelations*, or the things that were taught them, *with all Readiness of Mind*. Thus therefore, whatever we find to be contained in the Holy Scripture, this we are readily to receive as the Object of our Faith, tho' we cannot understand it; because we have all imaginable Evidence of the Scriptures being truly the Word of God, and consequently that all the Doctrinal Articles thereof come from Him.

And when we find any Truth plainly revealed in that Holy Word as an Article of our Faith, tho' we may be ready to think that there are some other Passages in the Bible, that have a very different Aspect from the Doctrine so revealed; we are not to suppose that those Passages overthrow the Truth and Certainty of the Article of Faith plainly expressed (for this would be to make the Word of God clash and interfere with Itself, which would sap the Foundation of all our Religion): But we are more thoroughly to look into those different Passages, and consider their Relation to the Context, their Scope and Design, and their several Circumstances, that they may, as they may, be brought into an exact Agreement and Correspondence with the Truth more plainly and fully revealed unto us; and rather modestly think that our want of understanding the Nature of the things revealed, is the Ground of our fancying there is any Contrariety between them. For since the Doctrinal Articles of the Christian Religion have the utmost Confirmation given to them, we have a most sure Foundation for our Faith in them; and this is the only Reason of our Faith, that God hath so and so spoken to us in His Holy Word; tho' we cannot fully explain it to our selves, or satisfy the Curiosity of others, much less the prurient Humour

of such, as strain their feeble Powers to snarl at what is above their reach.

Here I will briefly instance in a few Articles.

The Doctrine of the *Trinity in the Unity of the Godhead*! This is a profound Mystery, which I suppose no Man pretends fully to understand. That God should necessarily be but One; and yet that this One God should be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost [and so distinct, that the Father is not the Son or Spirit; nor the Son, the Father or Spirit; nor the Holy Spirit, the Father or the Son]; how, or after what manner this can be, I am not able to comprehend. And yet, there is scarce any one Article of our Christian Faith more plainly revealed to us in the Sacred Scripture, in the Assurance which it gives us that there is but One God, and the Distinction which it every where makes between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And how full is that Text to this Purpose? in *St. John v. 7. There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One.*

Thus again; the *Incarnation of the Son of God*; how mysterious a Doctrine is this? That He who is the True God should take Flesh upon Him, and become so united to that Flesh as to dwell among Men on the Earth; to sustain the Office of a Mediator for Sinners between God and Man, and in the Execution of that Office, to have all the Sufferings, which the human Nature only could undergo, ascribed unto Him who is truly God; and to have all the Honours of Religious Worship, the Government of the World, and Power to bestow eternal Life, which are compatible to none but the Divine Nature, ascribed unto Him who is truly MAN. Who can comprehend the unfathomable Depths hereof? And yet what more plainly revealed? *1 Tim. iii. 16. Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh. 1 John v. 20. We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know the true one, and we are in the true one, in his Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God.*

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Again ; The *Eternity and Immortality of the Divine Counsel and Decree* ; that there is nothing comes to pass without, or besides, the eternal Purpose and Decree of God ; that all the Actions of His Creatures, from the greatest to the least, are determined thereby ; this appears a great Mystery, when we consider the Freedom of the Will of a voluntary or rational Agent : But yet how plainly and fully is this revealed ? *Matth. x. 29, 30. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father ; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Eph. i. 11. --- who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

Again ; The Doctrine of *Election and Preterition* is exceeding puzzling ; we cannot understand how it is consistent with the free Offers of the Gospel, and the diligent Use of Means required of Men, that God should certainly elect some to Salvation, and not others ; and that none but those whom He elects shall be saved : And yet what more plainly revealed ? How often do the Apostles tell us of the *Election of Grace* ? And how full and clear is the Apostle in this ? In *Rom. ix. 15. ---* where he designedly handles this Argument, *For He saith to Moses (that is, God saith) I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion ; so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy ; he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

And to add no more ; the Doctrine of the *Resurrection of the Body* ; it seems to be unaccountable, how the same Body, after it has been converted into the Dust of the Ground, and scattered into the four Winds of Heaven, or after it has been consumed in the Fire, or turned into the Aliment of the Beasts of the Field, the Birds of the Air, or the Fishes in the Sea ; how it is possible this same Body should rise again. It is very difficult to understand any thing of the Mystery of it : Yet we are expressly told by our Lord, *John v. 28, 29. All that are in their graves shall come forth ; they that have done good*

good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.

Now, shall any be so vain as to say, these Doctrines are not True, because they cannot understand them, how they can possibly be, or reconcile them to some of their Thoughts and Schemes of things? where then is their Faith? Surely we have a firm Foundation for our Faith in them, tho' they be never so intricate and mysterious, because they are plainly revealed in the Word of God; and we have all imaginable reason to believe them, tho' they remain never so much above the Comprehension of our Intellect, because they have the utmost Confirmation, as to the Truth of them, that can reasonably be required. So that if we will not believe upon the Testimony of *Moses*, and the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, so strongly confirmed to us, *neither shall we be perswaded tho' one rose from the dead*, as our Saviour says, *Luke xvi. 31.*

Thus as to all the *Duties of Instituted Worship*. This is the Reason of our Conformity to such and such Rites, and such a manner of Worship, because this is what is required of us in the Word of God; which being the only certain Revelation which God hath made of His Mind unto the World, and being sufficiently confirmed to us, is the only infallible Rule of our serving of Him, and all other Rules that differ from this are but fallible, and therefore little to be regarded by us. Since from the Word of God we know, in the general, what Officers Christ hath appointed in His Church, what are the Rites and Ceremonies He hath instituted, and what is the Discipline He would have us to observe; these, and these only, are we to keep to; because these only are any part of the Christian Religion, as coming from Jesus Christ the Head of the Church; and all others, that come purely from the Inventions of Men, are so far no Part of the Christian, but belong to a Religion of another Denomination. For since Jesus Christ hath made known to us His Mind, this must needs be our only Rule to govern our selves by, in all the Duties of Religious Worship.

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To which purpose, I think it will be worth while to transcribe a Passage from the famous Mr. *Richard Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity* * (where, after he had been discoursing on the Nature of Laws in general, and the various kinds of Laws in particular, and the Obligation to observe them, he comes to this Conclusion, with respect to Ecclesiastical Laws): “ The Church being a Society, and
 “ a Society supernatural; altho’, as it is a Society, it
 “ hath the self-same original Grounds which other po-
 “ litick Societies have, namely, the natural Inclination
 “ which all Men have unto sociable Life, and consent
 “ unto some certain Bond of Association, which Bond
 “ is the Law that appointeth what kind of Order they
 “ shall be associated in: Yet unto the Church, as it is
 “ a Society supernatural, this is peculiar, that Part of the
 “ Bond of their Association which belong to the Church
 “ of God, must be a Law supernatural, which God Him-
 “ self hath revealed concerning that kind of Worship
 “ which the People shall do unto Him.” Which me-
 morable Passage, if thoroughly examined, I am apt to think, would be sufficient to invalidate his whole (esteem-
 ed unanswerable) Book, as to the particular End for which it was written, namely, to support such a Wor-
 ship and Government in the Church of God, as is not of God’s own Appointment. For it is very evident, that if *the Church, as a supernatural Society, has this pecu-
 liar; that that Part of the Bond of their Association which
 belong to the Church of God, must be a Law supernatural,
 which God Himself hath revealed concerning that kind of
 Worship, which His People shall do unto Him*; then the whole Law about the Worship of God, as to the Man-
 ner and Rites of it, and the Government of his Church, must be a supernatural Law, and come only from God Himself. For this is *the Bond of their Association which
 belongs to them as a supernatural Society, that is, as the
 Church of God.* For no Part of the Worship of God
 in

in His House, or the significant Rites and Ceremonies thereof, nor the Officers and Government of the Church, belong to Men considered only as Men, nor yet considered in any civil political Society whatsoever ; but belong to them only as an Ecclesiastical Body, or the Church of God, or a supernatural Society. And these supernatural Laws which God hath given about His Worship, and the Government of His Church, they remain *for ever, unless God Himself which made them, alter them* (as Mr. Hooker well observes*) ; so that it is in the Power of no Man, or number of Men, to add to them, or take from them. And *that Part of the Bond of their Association which belongs to them as a Society of Men*, simply considered, can be no other, than what relates to the Order and Decency of Time and Place, and such other necessary Appendages and Circumstances of Worship.

So that upon the whole ; as we have no need to go to *Popes and Councils*, to decree what shall be Articles of our Faith, because their decreeing them will *make nothing True which was not so before* ; so neither is there any Necessity, that we should fetch the Manner of our Worship, the significant Rites and Ceremonies thereof, nor the Government of the Church of Christ, from any Laws, either Civil or Ecclesiastical, that are not to be found in the Word of God. Because *we have a more sure Word of Prophecy*, an infallible Rule to go to in all these Affairs, confirmed to us, to be the Word of God, by the fullest and most incontestible Evidence that can reasonably be desired. [For since it hath pleased God to reveal His Mind unto the World (and so to supercede the Law of Nature by His positive Commands) I can find no Legislative Power lodged in the Hands, either of Civil or Ecclesiastical Officers, respecting the Way, Manner, and Circumstances of Divine Worship ; but in these things we are to follow the positive Law of God.

For

* *Ubi supra.*

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For tho' the Civil Magistrate has Power, as a nursing Father of the Church, to enjoyn the preaching of the Doctrines, and the Administration of the Sacraments of the Gospel; yet he has no Power lawfully to forbid the preaching of those Doctrines, or to command the Sacraments to be administer'd otherwise than Christ hath delivered them down to us. And tho' the internal, formal, elicitive Power, concerning these things, is proper only to the Ministry, by virtue of their Office; yet this does not suppose an authoritative Power in them, to make new Laws about the Way, Manner, and Circumstances of Divine Worship, but only a Declarative and Executive Power in their Attendance to that Way, Manner, and Form of Worship which Christ Himself hath instituted; because their Commission, which runs in these Terms (*Matth. xxviii. 20.*) *Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you,* gives no Authority to make New Laws, but rather is a tying them up to the Commands of Christ, already laid down in His Word. And tho' the particular Place and Time, and the Order and Decency of performing the several Parts of Worship, may, with due Regard had to the general Rules laid down in the Word of God, be determined by the Civil Power, so far as is consistent with the Peace and Welfare of the whole, or rather by the Agreement of each particular worshipping Society, for itself; yet since the Good or Evil of all our Acts of Worship, considered in themselves, turns upon the Reference which such Acts have to the Divine Acceptance, they must necessarily therefore have Dependence upon a Divine Command; and consequently, all the Positives of Worship, and the Manner of those Acts, are no further acceptable to God, than as they are commanded by Him*. How absurd then is it, to set up a decreeing Power in the Church, and put it into the Hands of fallible Men, guided by their natural Intellect, to give Law to us, and
to

* See Dr. *Stillingfleet Iren.* [2 Edit. from p. 36. to p. 46.]

to be the Bond of the Association of a supernatural Society, in things pertaining to the Worship of God? when God Himself hath plainly revealed to us in his Word, what is the Duty which He requireth of us; and has left every Man to the Liberty of his own Judgment*, in the Improvement of the best Light he can get, to determine for himself what that Duty is; without appointing any external Power to force and compel him, by any Violences upon his Person, Name or Interest, to what he is not satisfied in, or what he thinks to be disagreeable to Holy Word, which he makes his only infallible Rule. This would be to make Religion truckle to human Policy, and the Creator to give place to the Creature; whereas the ultimate End of Man, and of all things, is the Advancement of the Divine Glory, in a ready Obedience to His Will, and Subjection of our Understanding and all our Powers to the Government of His Revelations. When therefore any Rite or significant Ceremony in the Worship of God, or any Officer or Form of Government in His Church, is urged upon us, our Duty is calmly and diligently to *search the Scriptures, and see if these things be so*; and if we find them there under any particular or general Rule, in God's Name let us conform to them, because He hath required them of us; but if they be not to be found in the Word of God, what then have we to do with them?]
To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. † I am greatly

* “ Every one hath a *judicium privata discretionis*, which is the
 “ Rule of Practice, as to himself: And tho’ we freely allow a Ministerial Power, under Christ, in the Governours of the Church,
 “ yet that extends not to an Obligation upon Men, to go against
 “ the Dictates of their own Reason and Conscience. . . . If every
 “ private Person must judge what is lawful, and what not (as
 “ when all is said, every Man will be his own Judge in this Case,
 “ in things concerning his own Welfare) then he is no further bound
 “ to obey, than he judgeth the Thing to be lawful, which is commanded. As the Doctor argues *supra*, p, 118, 119.

† *Isa.* 8. 20.

greatly mistaken, if this was not the intended Force of our Saviour's Reasoning with the *Pharisees*, when He said to them, *Matth. xv. 3, 9. Why do you transgress the commandment of God, by your traditions? - - - in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.*

3. Hence we may infer, the Reasonableness of our *abiding firm* in our Profession and Practice of the Christian Religion, as it is taught us in the Word of God. For if the Christian Religion has the utmost Confirmation given to it that can reasonably be required, and we have the fullest Evidence, that the Holy Scriptures, wherein that Religion is contained, is indeed the Word of God, then it is highly reasonable that we should abide firm in our Profession and Practice of that Holy Religion, as it is contained in those Divine Oracles. For no other Religion has, or can have, such Confirmation given to it; and no wise Man will part with that which is most certainly confirmed to him by infallible Testimony, to take up with that which is less certain and evident; and therefore it is most reasonable, that we should abide stanch and immoveably fixed in our Adherence to that Christian Religion, which we find contained in the Oracles of God, and reject every thing that we do not find warranted there. For (as Dr. *Tillotson* notes *) “ The
“ Scriptures are a perfect Rule, and all things are plainly
“ contained in them, which concern Faith and Life;
“ and whatsoever cannot be proved by Testimony of
“ Scripture is to be rejected.

Indeed we ought in Reason to examine our Holy Religion in all its Parts, as to the Truth of it, and not take up with a Christian Profession, because we were born and educated in that Religion; but then our Tryal of it, must be by that Word, which is our only infallible Guide; and when we find our Religion, as to Faith and Practice, is conformable to that Word, we should
hold

*hold it fast, as our Crown; and not suffer any Men to take it from us, let them be never so confident of their being in the right, and try to impose their Dogma's upon us with never so much Assurance; " because there is no " reason (as the Doctor observes *) to have regard to " any Man's Confidence, if the Arguments and Reasons " which he brings, bear no Proportion to it " (and that, I say, they cannot do in this Case, if they are either without or contrary to the Scriptures); for the Rule of Instituted Religion is Divine Revelation, or the Word of God. We should therefore hearken to the Advice of the Apostle Paul to his Son Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 13. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.*

We profess the Christian Faith and Worship which we have received from our Forefathers, as a Form of sound Words, contained in the Holy Scriptures, as the only Rule of our Holy Religion in all the Parts of it; and since this is so strongly confirmed to us, let us then *hold it fast without wavering, and be not tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but let us hold, and speak the truth in love, that we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.*

No Pretensions to Infallibility, in them that are called the Guides of the Church, should have any Influence upon us, to move us from the Stedfastness of our Faith and Practice, because we know that we have a more infallible Rule, than the Dictates of any Men whatsoever since the Days of our Saviour and His Apostles. We should therefore (as the great Archbishop expresses it †) " govern our Belief and Practice, in Matters of Religion, " by the true ancient Rule of Christianity, the Word of " God contained in the Holy Scriptures.

[Nor

* *Supra*, p. 153.

† *Supra*, p. 276.

[Nor should any Pleas, to shew us a more easy Way to get to Heaven than what the Christian Religion, as contained in the Word of God, admits of, be of any Weight with us, to make us forego the Principles and Duties which we are taught in the Divine Oracles. For since God has shewed us in His Word, what He requireth of us, as to the practical Duties of Religious Worship, as well as what is that Faith and Morality which we are to live in the Exercise of; and has directed us in this Way to seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, and Eternal Life; we may not reasonably think, that there can be any easier Way to get to Heaven; or that any Way short of this, how easy soever it may appear to us, will be a direct Course thither. For (as that great Man says *) “ They that offer Heaven to
 “ Men upon so very large and loose Terms, give great
 “ Cause to suspect, that they will never make the good
 “ Offer; the Terms are so unreasonably cheap and easy,
 “ that there must be some Fraud and False-dealing.

And tho’ any should attempt to terrify us with the bold Pretence, that we cannot be saved unless we come into their Schemes; and are not Christians, tho’ we observe all the Institutions of Jesus Christ, and obey all His Laws, because (forsooth) we do not conform to their uninstituted Rites of Worship, and Form of Government; this uncharitable Confidence should have no Influence upon us, to withdraw us from our steadfast Adherence to what we find required of us in the Sacred Scripture. For we may, with much more of Reason, venture the Eternal Salvation of our Souls upon the sure and certain Guidance of the infallible Word of God, which points out our whole Duty and Happiness to us, than upon the confident Assertions (not to say intriguing Designs) of any Men whatsoever: “ And of all things
 “ that can be thought of (says Dr. Tillotson †) methinks
 the

* *Supra*, p. 215. † P. 288, and 250. I must do the Doctor and my self the Justice to observe, that my changing *the Church of Rome* for *that Church* in p. 250. no ways alters his Sense and Force of Reasoning.

“ the Want of Charity in any Church should be a Motive to no Man to fall in Love with it, and to be fond of its Communion ; - - and to a wise Man there needs no other Demonstration than this, that *that Church* is so far from being the whole Christian Church, that it is a very arrogant and uncharitable Part of it.

And I am amazed to find any that have had their Education among our selves (where they have had the free Liberty of the Use of the Bible) choosing to retire so far under the Shades of the *Papal* Darkeness, as to make use of this uncharitable Argument to perswade any to come into their Communion ; which, if they did but think closely of, they would see to be so strong an Argument to drive us further from them.

In a word ; as no subtle Craftiness nor bold Pretensions of Men should withdraw us from our Profession and Practice of the Christian Religion, as it is taught us in the Word of God ; so neither should any Smiles and Allurements, Frowns or Terrors from the World, be able to prevail with us to renounce that Holy Religion, which we have handed down to us from our Forefathers and confirmed to us in the Sacred Scriptures. For certainly the Rewards of a steady Perseverance in the Belief and Practice of what God requires of us in the infallible Rule of His Holy Word, will abundantly make up for all the Losses we may sustain, or Sufferings we may undergo for the sake thereof. We should therefore *obey from the heart, the form of sound doctrine that has been delivered to us, and stand fast in the faith. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*]

4. Lastly ; Let us all then be perswaded to become *real Christians* For since the Christian Religion is so confirmed to us, as that we cannot reasonably require stronger Evidence than we already have of all the Parts of it, certainly it will well become us, and we are under indispensable Obligations to be Christians in Truth and Sincerity ; that is to say, that we receive the Truth in the Love thereof, as it is in Jesus, and that we take

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care to order our whole Walk and Conversation according to the Word of God.

Christianity does not lie altogether in Externals, in a visible Profession, and an Attendance to the outward Mode and Form of Worship; but while these ought to be observed by us, as we are directed, we are to remember that the Design of our Holy Religion is to have the whole Government of our Heart and Life.

Well then, let us see to it that we firmly believe all the Articles of the Christian Religion, even whatsoever we find recorded in the Sacred Pages as Doctrines of Religion; and that not barely with a naked Credence, but with such a fixed Perswasion of the Truth and Importance of them, as may have a due Influence upon our whole Practice; that in the Faith thereof we may be able to say with the Apostle *Paul*, Acts xxiv. 16. *Herein do I exercise my self, to have always a conscience void of offence, both towards God, and towards man.*

What is it to be a real Christian? but to believe in Jesus Christ and to be a Follower of Him. Let it then be our great Care, that the Life we now live in the Flesh, we live by the Faith of the Son of God; receiving all that Christ has taught us as faithful Sayings, and worthy of all Acceptation by us; submitting our selves to Him as our only Head and Lord, and look for all our Guidance, Direction and Assistance from Him; and relying intirely upon His alone Mediation and Intercession for Pardon, and Acceptance with God.

Let us become also the meek and humble Followers of Jesus, who has given us the most bright and illustrious Example of Obedience to the Divine Law; that abiding in Him, we may also walk as he walked, and live up to all the Moral Duties that are required of us; being filled with all Righteousness and Goodness, having in us a Readiness of Mind, ever to do unto others, as we would that they should do unto us; to do all kind Offices to all that are about us, and to forgive all that injure us.

Let

Let not the Heathen World shame and reproach us, by their Acts of Justice and Charity; while we profess our selves to be Christians, who have a more perfect Law, a more forcible Example, and a better Hope; and so are under stronger Bonds to all Moral Virtues than any Heathen possibly can be.

And particularly, while we should think it an unreasonable Hardship to have any thing imposed upon us, in the Worship of God, which we do not see sufficiently warranted in the Scripture; let us be careful that we do not run into the same Error, by our attempting to impose upon others, what they are not satisfied in their Consciences the infallible Rule of the Divine Oracles requires of them.

And while we are ready to look upon it, as a very harsh and unchristian-like Spirit, for any to put us out of a salvable State, because we are not just of their Length and Size in the Rituals of Religion, and the external Form of the Government of the Church of God; let us be exceeding careful to live in Love and Charity with all such as call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, tho' they may think they see Reason sufficient to differ from us, as to the outward Rites and Modes of Divine Worship.

Thus let us approve our selves Christians indeed, who not only make Profession of the Christian Religion, but live answerable, in some good measure, to what that Holy Religion requires of us. And since it has all the Evidence of the Truth of it, that can reasonably be desired, let us manifest the Force and Power of it upon our Hearts, by proportionable Degrees of Faith and Obedience.

Remember that the All-seeing Eye of God is upon us, which critically marks, not only our outward Deportment and Behaviour, but the inward Frames and Actings of our Minds, both towards God and our Neighbour.

Remember also that ere long He will summon us before His dreadful Tribunal, where we must render an exact Account to Him, of all the Deeds which we have
done

46 *The Christian Religion, &c.*

done in the Body, and receive our Reward from Him, according to what the Nature of those Deeds have been, whether good or evil.

And think how awefully speechless, how amazingly inexcusable we shall be at that Day? and consequently how tremendous our Punishment will be? if we have not embraced the Christian Religion in Truth and Sincerity, and endeavoured to live up to all that it requireth of us. For, as the Apostle says in the Verse where my Text is, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord; and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him.*



Compel



Compel them to come in.

LUKE XIV. 23.

And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the high-ways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.



Our Blessed Lord sat at an Entertainment, in the House of a certain Pharisee, He observed two great Errors prevailing among them; namely, an ambitious striving to have the Preeminence, and a Neglect of the Poor. Therefore in the former Part of the Chapter, we find Him prudently rebuking their Pride and Haughtiness, and directing, as a point of Wisdom, rather to take a Place below than above themselves; because it would be more Honour to them to have the Master of the Feast say to them, Come up hither, than Go down and give place to your Betters. And then He excites them to a greater Charity to the Poor, exhorting them, when they made a Feast, not to neglect and overlook those, who, by reason of their Poverty, could not retaliate their Kindness; but be sure to have a due

48 *Compel them to come in.*

due Remembrance of them, that they might fare the better for their Abundance; for tho' they could not requite them, yet they should receive the full Recompence of all their Charity at the Resurrection of the just.

One of the Company, observing the Discourse of our Lord, seems to have some agreeable Emotion of Soul, in an eager Thirst after that glorious Recompence of Reward, which drew from him that devout Exclamation, Verse 15. *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!* Upon which our Saviour takes occasion to utter the Parable, of which my Text is a Part, *Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many, &c.*

I shall not need to go over the several Parts of the Parable, but only observe to you the general Scope and Design thereof; namely, that the gracious Offer and Tender of the Gospel, and the Life and Immortality brought to light by Jesus Christ, are represented to us under the Characters of a Great or Marriage Supper. The People to whom the Servants of the great Lord were firstly sent, was the *Jewish* Nation; who made light of the Invitation, and by many Excuses and Pretences baffled all the Pains that was taken with them, and so refused to own Jesus Christ, and accept of Salvation by Him; and therefore had that Doom pronounced upon them, by the Master of the Feast, *that none of those men that were bidden should taste of My supper*: That is, as they rejected Jesus Christ, and would not own Him for the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World; so they should have no Benefit by Him, nor any Interest in His great Salvation. And therefore the Servants are sent into the *Streets and Lanes*, to call in the *poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind*; yea, are sent into the *High-ways and Hedges*, into the most publick and most retired Parts of the World, to invite, and even to compel the *Gentiles* to believe on a Crucified Saviour, that they might partake of His Benefits, and live for ever.

This

Compel them to come in. 49

This seems to be the first Intention of the Parable: 'Tis an Invitation and Call given first to the *Jews*, and then unto the *Gentiles*, to embrace Christianity, to believe in Christ and obey Him, to come into the Church-state under Him, the Author of the Christian Religion, that they may be feasted by Him with all those blessed Benefits of Grace and Glory, which He will assuredly bestow upon all that truly submit to Him: But as for all those that will not come to His Supper, upon the Invitation given, that refuse to acknowledge Him for their Head, will not hearken to His Commands, nor accept at His Hands the Benefits which He offers to them; they shall be never the better for the plentiful Provision He has made, nor have any share in the happy Fruits of His Incarnation and Death.

In the Words of my Text I would more particularly observe Two or Three Things; as,

1. *Jesus Christ's repeating His Message* by His Servants. He had sent them out before, once and again, and now sends them out the third time upon the same Errand, to invite Persons to His Supper, or embrace the Gospel-Offer; hereby manifesting His Unwillingness to take a First or even a Second Denial. Tho' He might justly be so affronted with our first Refusal of His offer'd Grace and Mercy, considering He is so Great a Lord, and we such poor mean Worms of the Dust, as to take us at our Word, and leave us to repent our Folly when it is too late; yet He makes His Offer again and again, hereby giving us a Pattern of Patience, in his overlooking the Indignities that are cast upon Him; of Long-suffering, that He can bear long with our evil Manners; and of hearty Good-will to us, that He is not willing that any should perish, but had rather that all should be brought to the Love and Practice of the Truth, that they may be saved. Therefore it is that He repeats His Call, that, if possible, He may at length prevail upon poor unthinking Sinners to come to Him and be happy.

50 *Compel them to come in.*

2. I observe the *Largeness of the Commission* given to His Servants, which also directs them what Pains He would have them to use to bring Persons to His House and Table, or to become real Christians; *Compel them to come in.* As if He had said, Go again, and ask them in my Name, yea, intreat them and perswade them to come; use the most forcible Arguments with them, the most prevailing Motives, to constrain them; and so compel them to their Duty and Interest; take no Denial, but insist upon it, that they ought to come, and it will be every way to their Advantage to partake of My Supper, which I have provided for them. The Greek Word here used [*ἀναγκασειν*] does not mean to compel them by Rods and Axes, by Force and Arms, but by Counsel, Entreaty, and Perswasion; so use an holy Force and Compulsion with them, to bring them into My House. All of which is expressive of the most earnest Desire of Christ, that all that hear the joyful Sound of the Gospel would heartily submit to the gracious Offers of it.

3. We have the Reason of all this Pains and Compulsion, *viz. that my House may be filled*: That is, That as many as are the Designd Guest, as many as there is Room and Provision for, may come to the Supper, and receive each one their Portion ready carved out for them. Jesus Christ is not willing that any should go without the Blessing. The Provision is large and full, there is Room enough and to spare, and He would have all to come and partake of it, that His House may be filled; that the whole Number of them that shall be saved may be gathered in, and the Church of Christ may be completed: Till which time, and for which end, He would have His Servants, His Ministers, to use an holy Violence, and compel Persons to embrace the Christian Religion, and live up to what that requires of them, that they may receive the Benefits which He has provided for them. I might raise many Observations from the Words, but I intend only to speak a little to this general Doctrine.

Doctr.

Compel them to come in. 51

Doctr. That Jesus Christ would have His Ministers to compel Persons to come to His Supper, that His House may be filled. Under this Doctrine I shall discourse briefly on these Two Propositions.

I. That Jesus Christ most earnestly desires that His House may be filled.

II. That in order hereto, Jesus Christ would have His Ministers to compel Persons to come to His Gospel-Feast or Supper.

I. Prop. That Jesus Christ most earnestly desires, that His House may be filled.

Here I would say,

I. That the Church is the House of Jesus Christ. Thus the Tabernacle of the Lord is reared up in the Earth, and God dwells among Men in that House or Church-state, which Jesus Christ hath founded.

The Church may be defined, *A Society of visible Saints or Believers, worshipping the Lord in all His holy Ordinances.* This Church of visible Believers, even all the World over, is the House of Jesus Christ.

As an House, it is founded upon a sure and immovable Foundation, *the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* Eph. ii. 20. As an House, it consisteth of proper Materials, duly compacted and cemented together; *and all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord.* Verse 21. And as an House, it is inhabited and dwelt in by some proper Person; being *an habitation of God thro' the Spirit.* Verse 22. Hence the Church is stiled, *the House of God,* 1 Tim. iii. 15. *The House of God, which is the Church of the Living God.*

This House does peculiarly belong unto Jesus Christ; *My House,* says He in my Text. 'Tis an House founded upon Him as the only solid Foundation thereof, *other foundation than which can no man lay.* 1 Cor. iii. 11. The Materials thereof are provided, framed, and fashioned by Him, as the great Master-builder, who, by his Skill and Labour in the great Work of Redemption, has

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built us up into an Holy Temple in the Lord. See *Heb. iii. 3, 6.* And 'tis an House which He hath dearly bought and paid for, even the Price of His own Blood. Hence is that Advice to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, *Acts xx. 28.* *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood.* And as His House, He is the Head-Lord and Ruler of it, the Church being subject to Him, and He filleth it. *Eph. i. 22, 23.* *And gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.* Thus is the Church the House of Jesus Christ.

2. *Our coming into the Church-state is an additional Filling of this House.* There is an Initiation into the Church-state by our receiving the *Baptism* of the Lord upon us, by which we firstly become the visible Members of the Church of Christ. Whether, or how far Persons, that have not been baptized, may be considered as Members of the Invisible Church, is not my Business at present to determine: But this is plain, that till they have received this Badge of their Discipleship upon them, they are not visible Members of the Church of Christ. For it is their publick Dedication of themselves to Christ and His Service, in the Observation of this Rite, that first initiates them visibly into the Christian Profession, and so makes visible Members of them.

But then, tho' we are firstly introduced into the Church-state by our Baptism, yet while any content themselves with this only, and look no further, they are got but as into the Porch of the House, they are not come into the inner Appartments thereof, and so are not visible Believers in the full Sense of the Church-state; nor have Right to all the Privileges of that State, until they approach to the *Table of the Lord*. The *Jewish* Church was to observe, not only the Rite of Circumcision, but that of the Passover as well; and the Disciples of Jesus Christ are not only to be baptized, but to attend upon the Holy Supper, in Remembrance of Him.

Luke

Compel them to come in. 53

Luke xxii. 19. Do this in remembrance of Me. For tho' they may observe one of the Institutions of Christ, yet there is great room to question the Sincerity of their Discipleship, if they wilfully or too carelessly neglect the other. They are properly the Guest in His House, who sit down at His Table, and not they that stand at the Windows, or in the Porch, looking on. And every one that is so added to the Church, by a serious Approach to the Holy Table of the Lord, does so far gradually add to the filling of His House. Those that were *added to the Church*, we are told, (*Acts i. 46.*) were such as continued *daily in the temple* (upon all the proper Seasons of assembling there) *and in breaking of bread* (partaking of the Lord's Supper) *eating their meat* (this spiritual Food) *with gladness* (a holy Joy in God) *and singleness of heart* (with Purity and Uprightness.)

3. *It is the earnest Desire of Jesus Christ that His House may be filled.* He sends out His Servants to invite and call upon them to come in ; and so earnestly desirous is He of the filling of His House, that He cannot endure to see Persons turn their back upon His Institutions, and refuse to embrace the Christian Religion ; it is a Grief to Him to see His Gospel-Feast neglected, and that any are so unwise as to be averse to their own Good. He would have a holy Violence used with them, rather than that they should stay away and go without the Blessing. And needs must He so earnestly desire the Filling of His House.

For Jesus Christ earnestly desires the eternal Welfare of all that the Father hath given to Him. All that shall receive any special Benefit by Christ, are given to Him by the Father, in the eternal Covenant of Redemption. He says, *John xvii. 6. Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me.* And because they belong to Him, by Right of Donation from the Father, therefore He is necessarily so concerned for their Welfare, that He will not suffer One of the many Thousands that are given to Him, to be lost (as Verse 12.) Now the Coming into the Church-State in Sincerity, is a betaking ourselves to Jesus Christ

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Christ for Salvation, and a receiving the Pledges and Earnest of our future Happiness. 'Tis by Faith to receive Jesus Christ into our Hearts, and to be rooted and grounded in His Love. Hence Jesus Christ cannot but earnestly desire that His House may be filled, that all that the Father hath given to Him, may come to Him, and eat of that Bread which came down from God out of Heaven, and drink of that spiritual Rock; that so eating His Flesh, and drinking his Blood, they may have eternal Life, and He may raise them up at the last Day. Hence he prayed not only for them that did believe on Him in the Days of His Flesh upon Earth, but for *all that should believe on His Name, that they all may be one in us, and that they may be with Him to behold His Glory.* John xvii. 20, 21, 24.

Yea, Jesus Christ cannot but desire to see His Seed, the Fruit of the Travail of His Soul. It was of old promised unto Him (*Isa. liii. 10, 11.*) that *if He would make His soul an offering for sin, He should see His seed and the travail of His soul, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in His hands.* Now Jesus Christ has undertaken the difficult Task; He has born the Brunt, and travailed in Pain; He has trodden the Wine Press, satisfied Divine Justice, and appeased the Anger of God; He enter'd into the Territories of Death, and overcame it; He has encounter'd with him that had the Power of Death and intirely master'd him, and has risen Triumphant over all the Enemies of our Salvation; and thus having made His Soul an Offering for Sin, it cannot but be pleasing to Him to see the great Work of Redemption prosper, and many Sons and Daughters born to Him, as the Fruit of this Travail of His Soul; and therefore He cannot but earnestly desire that His House may be filled. For those that make a suitable Profession of the Christian Religion, and live according to that Profession, they are His Children, the Workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto Good Works; and they come into the Church-state, the House of Christ, for a Child's Portion, which their heavenly Father has ready carved

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carved out for them. Hence by the Accession of proper Persons into the Church, as Guest at His Table, He sees that He has not died in vain and to no purpose ; but these are the Fruits of His Sufferings and Death, and He says upon it, as *Heb. ii. 13. Behold I, and the Children which God has given to Me.*

Finally ; Jesus Christ earnestly desires the filling up of His own Body. For there is a mystical Body of which He is the Head, and this Body is not perfect and complete, until every particular Member thereof is incorporated into it. Tho' the great Head of this mystical Body is altogether perfect in itself, and every Member of this Body, united to the Head, is perfect in Christ Jesus ; yet the whole Body is not intirely filled up, and so complete, until those who are yet to be gathered into it, are incorporated with it. Now what is the Church of Christ, but *His Body.* *Eph. i. 22.* And every true Believer in the Church of Christ is *a Member in particular,* *1 Cor. xii. 27.* Hence in every Addition that is made to the Church, there is a new visible Member incorporated into this Body ; and every one that truly is what he professes to be, by coming into the Church-State, grows up in Him, and is really a Part of that mystical Body. And the more are joyned to the Church, the more that Body is filled up, until the whole Number shall come in the Unity of the Faith, and Knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. For this end it is, that Christ hath instituted His Ordinances, and sends forth His Servants, to invite and call upon Persons to come to His Supper. Thus, *Eph. iv. 11, 12. He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers, for the preserving of the saints, --- for the edifying the Body of Christ.* Hence therefore He must needs earnestly desire the Filling of His House, because it is the Filling up of His mystical Body. And indeed, the great Pains He has taken ; the many Messages He has sent His Servants upon ; the full and abundant Provision He has made, enough for as many as His House, which

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which is roomly and spacious, will hold ; and the many Perswasions He useth to prevail upon Persons of all Ranks and Orders to come ; all of it speaks the earnest Desire He has, that His House may be filled.

II. *Prop.* That in order hereto, *Jesus Christ would have His Ministers to compel Persons to come to His Gospel-Feast.* He earnestly desires that the Guest at His Feast, the sincere Professors of Christianity, may be numerous, as the Provision is large ; and that so they may be answerable to His Wishes, He orders His Servants not only to invite, but even compel them to come in. The great Difficulty here is, to know what sort of Compulsion it is which Christ would have His Servants to make use of, in bringing Persons into His House, into His Church, and to His Institutions. That this may be aright understood, let us take up the following Conclusions.

1. *That Jesus Christ hath invested His Ministers with a Fulness of Authority and Power to manage the Affairs of His House or Kingdom.* The Supper or Feast is said to be made by a certain King, in the parallel Place, *Matth. xxii.*

2. The Servants He sends out are His Ministers, or the Officers under Him, to whom He hath committed the Management of the Affairs of His House or Kingdom : These Officers He has invested with a Fulness of Power and Authority for this End. Not that He has given His Officers Power to make new Laws as they please, and so to rule and govern the Church according to their own Will. This would be to put all the Power out of His own Hands, and set them up as Kings in His room. But He Himself, as the absolute and supreme Head and Monarch, has established His Laws, and published His Edicts, and told His Officers how He would have the Concerns of His House and Kingdom managed, and hath clothed them with a full Power and Authority to rule and govern according to those Laws which He has already made and provided. So that

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that it is not a Legislative, but an Executive Power that He hath invested them withal.

This Power and Authority is sufficiently confirmed to His Ministers, by the Commission which He, the Head of the Church and Lord in His Kingdom, has given to His Apostles, and in and with them to all their Successors, whether extraordinary (if such are to be found) or ordinary, to the End of the World. (Where, by the way, the Identity of the Commission speaks the Identity of the Office.) *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* This was not a bare Commission, but a proper Conveyance of Power and Authority to them; and therefore He said to them *Go*, and *Matth. x. 5.* He is said to *send* them hereunto; and when He gave them their Power He first specifies His own, to let the World know that He acted authoritatively in what He did: *Matth. xxviii. 18. All power* (says He) *is given unto Me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore, &c.* And He has confined this Power and Authority to His Ministers only, and has not left it at large for every one to usurp as they please, but has limited it to them, saying, *Matth. xvi. 19. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;* and in the very Form of their Commission, *go ye.* And all their Acts, in the regular Administration of the Affairs of His Kingdom, in Conformity unto His Laws, will receive their Sanction from Him, who will ratify and confirm what they so do, in the exercise of that Power He has intrusted them withal. Hence it follows in that, *Matth. xvi. 19. whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* This Power and the Confirmation of their Acts agreeable to it; He repeats, *Matth. xviii. 18.* to let them know that they acted by a Fulness of Power derived from Him; and that however any may lightly
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esteem them, yet the World shall at last be made sensible that their Authority was great, their Acts valid, and their regular Determinations irrevocable.

2. *This Power and Authority, which Jesus Christ has invested His Ministers with, is adapted to the Nature of that Kingdom, in which they are His Officers.* This necessarily results from the Nature of Things. The great Design of Jesus Christ is, to have all things so administer'd in His House or Kingdom, as may best tend to promote and advance the Common Good ; that thereby His Honour, as the only Rightful Sovereign, may be asserted and defended, and the Welfare of every Subject may be secured and increased. All the Laws of His Kingdom look this Way, and have a direct Tendency to this End : And consequently that Power, which He has invested His Ministers with, must necessarily be adapted to the Nature of this His Kingdom.

For Jesus Christ is too knowing and wise a Head and Lord, to give forth any Power or Authority, which is not suited to the Nature and Constitution of His Kingdom ; because such a Power would be alien and foreign to the Design which He has in view ; and indeed would be a Nullity, because inconsistent with the great Ends of His Government. For by this means the very Ends of His Government would be lost, and the Affairs of His Kingdom be thrown into the utmost Confusion. Our Blessed Saviour well observed, *Mark iii. 24. If a kingdom be divided against it self, that kingdom cannot stand.* And what could be a greater Division of a Kingdom against itself, than the Inconsistency of the Power of its Officers with the Nature and Constitution of that Kingdom. So that the very End aimed at, by committing Authority to His Ministers, namely, the Good and Welfare of His Kingdom, would be intirely lost, if that Power they were invested with, were not agreeable to the Nature of that Kingdom, in which they are to administer. Now,

3. *The Kingdom of which Jesus Christ is sole Lord, and in which He has constituted His Ministers, as His Officers under Him, is not a Temporal, but a Spiritual one.* The Nature of this Kingdom is not like the Kingdoms of this World, a Jurisdiction over the Estates, Bodies, and Lives of Persons; or a Kingdom governed by Temporal Laws, established by pecuniary Mulcts, and corporal Punishments. Such a Temporal Jurisdiction our Blessed Lord Himself for ever disclaimed. Hence, when certain Persons were contending about their Temporal Inheritance, and one of them said to Him, *Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me*; our Lord replied, *Luke xii. 14. Man, who made me a judge, or divider over you?* Hence also, when the *Jews*, from His being stiled a King, made it a Part of their Accusation against Him to *Pilate*, that He called Himself *King of the Jews*, meaning thereby a Temporal Monarch, and *Pilate* asked Him whether He was *King of the Jews* or no, our Lord gave Him that Answer, *John xviii. 36. My kingdom is not of this world*: By which He plainly declared the Accusation of the *Jews* to be false; and so *Pilate* understood Him, who upon this tells the *Jews*, that he found no fault in Him at all. For he never pretended to any thing of a Temporal or Worldly Kingdom and Jurisdiction; so He had no Subjects, no Laws, no Ministers or Officers, and claimed no Power.

But His Kingdom is a Spiritual Kingdom, which reaches to, and includes the Spirits and Consciences of Men under the Dominion of it. To this all His Laws are adapted, and the Affairs of the Estates and Bodies of Men are no further included under the Government of them, than the special Reference the Actions and Concernments thereof have to the Spiritual Interest of Men. Hence, in the Instance of those who sought to Him to divide their Inheritance, instead of taking any Temporal Jurisdiction upon Him, He immediately addresses Himself to their Consciences, and declares His Laws, which directed to the Government thereof; *Luke xii. 15. He*

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said unto them, take heed, and beware of covetousness. And as the Laws of His Kingdom are adapted to the Direction and Government of the Heart and Consciences of Men, so they are established by Sanctions peculiarly agreeable thereto; even the Threatening of Spiritual and Eternal Punishments in case of Disobedience, and the Promise of Eternal Life and Happiness in case of Obedience, according to the Tenure of the Gospel. Hence we are to d, *Matth. xxv. 46. These (that is, the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.* These Laws, and the Sanctions of them, are acted upon by His Ministers receiving suitable Persons into His Church, and to the Privileges of the glorious Hope; and in their dispensing the Censures or Discipline of His House, to those that walk unworthily. Hence,

4. *The Compulsion which Jesus Christ would have His Ministers to use, in bringing Persons into His House, and to the Gospel-Feast, is not of a Temporal, but of a Spiritual Nature.* For since the Power He has invested them with, is agreeable to the Nature of His House, and the Government of His Kingdom; and since His House, or Kingdom, and the Government thereof is Spiritual; therefore it must necessarily follow that, when He says, *Compel them to come in,* He did not mean any Temporal, but a Spiritual Compulsion. Particularly,

1. He could not mean a *Temporal Compulsion*, that is to say, any external Force upon the Bodies and Estates of Persons, to oblige them to profess the Christian Religion, and outwardly to conform themselves to the Rites of it. For such a Temporal Compulsion is alien and heterogeneous to His House or Kingdom, and the Government of it; all of which is Spiritual in its very Nature. So that penal Laws, by which Men are forced either to absent themselves from, or approach to the Gospel-Feast, by which they are brought into, or shut out of the visible Church of Christ, is such a Power as Jesus Christ never had in His Heart to commit to any
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of His Ministers; for He has expressly declared the contrary. *Luke xxii. 25, 26. He said unto them, the Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors: but ye shall not be so.* --- Earthly Kings justly exercise a Temporal Lordship over their Subjects; 'tis the very Design of their Advancement, to exercise their Authority upon them, in a regular Government of them in their Temporal Affairs; and they compel Men by their Laws, by Punishments upon the Estates or Bodies of Persons, to all Moral Virtue, as absolutely necessary to the Welfare of their Government: And while they administer justly in the Exercise of their Authority, they are called Benefactors, and ought so to be esteemed. *But so it shall not be with you,* the Officers in my Spiritual Kingdom; you are to have no such Temporal Authority, nor use any such external Compulsion, by virtue of any Commission you have, or may receive, from me; I have given you no such Authority, nor mean to give any such Power. Thus also, when His Disciples, *James and John*, were provoked that the *Samaritans* did not receive Him as they expected, they were for manifesting their Displeasure in Temporal Punishments upon them; *Lord, wilt thou (say they) that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them;* we are told, *Luke ix. 55, 56.* that our Lord rebuked them, and assured them, that *the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives.* It was not His Design to inflict corporal Punishments, nor pecuniary Mulcts upon any. He never meant to have His Mediatorial Kingdom, in the visible Manifestation of it in His Church, governed by Temporal Laws; or His Church promoted, and His Subjects increased by Rods and Axes, by Fire and Sword.

Such a Compulsion may suit with the Religion of *Constantinople* or *Rome*, but it is directly contrary to the Design of Christ, and the Spirit of His Gospel. For this sort of Compulsion is given as the distinguishing Character of *Antichrist*; and wheresoever this Mark is found,

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found, so much there is of the Spirit and Power of *Antichrist* prevailing among such a People. Hence, *Rev. xiii. 15, 16, 17.* he had power to cause, that as many as would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed; and he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. When Persons are thus compelled by Fines and Imprisonments, by Scourging, Racks, and Torture; when they are denied the Liberties of buying and selling, or the common and natural Rights of Mankind, because they cannot do as others would have them to do in Matters of Religion, this is a plain Character of *Antichrist* upon them; and all such Compulsion tends, not to make them the true Disciples of Jesus Christ, but the Worshipers of the Beast, the Creature of their own making. Thus the *Mahometan* and *Papal* Powers propagate their Religion; all must be compelled to an exact Conformity to them in their Religious Rites and Observations, by inflicting a Punishment upon their Purses and Bodies, if they will venture to do otherwise. But this is not according to the Laws of the Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, which knows no such Compulsion; and therefore our Lord forbid His Ministers to be called *Rabbi* in this Sense, as tho' they were Masters of the Consciences of Men, or had an Authority to impose their Laws, and force a Submission to them; and He gives this as the Reason, *Matth. xxiii. 8. For One is your Master, even Christ. i. e.* It is the Right of Christ alone to give Law to the Consciences of Men. Wherefore,

2. It is a *Spiritual Compulsion* that is here meant. For the Kingdom of Christ is Spiritual, His Laws are so too, so are His Rewards, and therefore so are His Punishments; and consequently *to compel them*, is not to force them *vi & armis*, with Weapons of War and penal Laws, but to compel them in a *Spiritual Way and Manner*; that
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is to say, to use such a Compulsion as is suited to the Spirit or the rational Part of the Man. We are told, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, thro' God, to the pulling down of strong holds --- and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* A Temporal Compulsion is no way suited to the Nature of the reasonable Spirits of Men. A Man may be so forced to make Profession of the Christian Religion, and observe the Institutions of Christ in His House, to save His worldly Interest, to preserve His Honour, or to prevent Fines, Losses, Confiscations and the like, and yet at the same time his Heart or Spirit be no ways concerned in what he is about ; nay, his Soul may have a Secret Abhorrence and Detestation of the Rite he is so forced to comply withal. Fire, and Fagot, and penal Laws may force the Body to a Compliance, for whose sake only the Soul is any ways affected with Reluctance and Dread at the Thoughts of them ; but can never touch the Soul itself, to determine her Rational Acts ; and therefore may possibly make Men Hypocrites, but can never make real Christians of them.

The Compulsion that is suited to our Rational and Spiritual Natures, is such as is like them Rational ; that is to say, Rational Arguments, strong cogent Persuasions, which carry clear and ungainsayable Evidence and Conviction with them, even such as shall move and prevail upon the Will of Man. *The Will, we say, cannot be compelled.* A Man may be compelled, by external Force upon his Body, to that which is directly contrary to the Dictates of his Reasonable Mind, and which his Will never gives in to. But no Man is so to be forced into the Church, or to the Observation of the Institutions of Christ ; because it is a Rational Service which Christ requires of us, and 'tis the Heart or Will which He chiefly looks for in all that come to partake of His Marriage Supper. Indeed no Man is truly brought into the House, to feast upon the Provision which

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which our great Lord has made for us, till he comes in a conscientious Regard to the Commands of Christ, and in a Sense of the Duty which he owes to Him, and to his own Soul; and his Will is sincerely engaged in all the Acts of Worship, and the Religious Rites which He attends upon. Hence Christ's Subjects are stiled a *willing People*, Pl. cx. 3. But when the Will, which has been averse to Coming to Christ, and to the Gospel-Feast, is overcome and perswaded, by the strong Motives laid before the Rational Mind, and the clear and plain Convictions given to it; then may it be said to be compelled: It is compelled by the Force of Reason, and the Power of the Divine Spirit, setting home the Rational Arguments, fetched from the Laws of Christ, the Promises and Threatenings of the Gospel, and so effectually working upon the Soul, to bring it to a Sense of its Duty, and a Compliance with it.

Thus in the Conversion of a Sinner, there is a Holy Force used to bow and incline the Will; and tho' this is done by the peculiar Agency of the Spirit of God, yet it is brought about in a Way suitable to the rational Nature of the Man, by the Motives, Arguments and Convictions laid before him in the Gospel.

And this is the Compulsion which Jesus Christ would have His Ministers to make use of, in bringing Persons into His House and Table, to profess the Christian Religion, and live in the Observation of all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord; namely, that they not only invite, but command authoritatively in His Name, and back their Commands with all imaginable Strength of Reasoning; that they set before Persons the most prevailing Arguments and Motives to work upon their Minds, to enlighten and convince their Understandings, to move their Hopes and Fears, and if possible incline their Will, and so compel them to come in, that His House may be filled. Therefore their Commission runs in these Terms; *Go ye, disciple all nations--- teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have com-*
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manded you; and so compel their rational Mind by teaching them better, and not force their Bodies by penal Laws, which will never sway the Conscience. Thus I have said what may be sufficient under the Doctrine, and now come to make some Improvement. And

1. *Is the Church the House of Jesus Christ? then how careful and circumspect ought they to be in their whole Deportment, who are in the visible Church? If it be His House, founded by and built upon Him, then surely they that are Members of the visible Church ought to take heed what Foundation they are built upon; that they are truly founded upon Jesus Christ the chief Corner-stone, elect and precious, that being built upon Him they may not be ashamed and confounded; that they are not founded upon their own Works, as trusting to and relying upon any Performances of their own for Favour and Acceptance with God. For other Foundation can no Man lay than that is laid, even Jesus Christ; and he that builds upon any other besides Him, does but found his Hope upon the Sand, which, in the Day of Storm and Trial, will certainly deceive him. Hence it is said of the Jews, Rom. ix. 31. --- Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained unto the law of righteousness. Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.*

Such as are in the visible Church are also to remember, that as it is Christ's House, so He only is to give Law thereto. For who but the great Master should command in His own House? If it be His House; then it is an invading of His rightful Authority to attempt to impose and injoin any other Laws in the Regulation thereof, than what He Himself hath enjoined. To the law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them; Isa. viii. 20. And it is a sufficient Answer to any that require of us this or the other significant Rite in the House of Christ, under the pretence of Order and Decency,

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cency, which we cannot find in the Laws of Christ, to say to them, the Master of the House hath not required it at our Hands. As *Moses* said to *Nadab* and *Abihu*, Levit. x. 1. they offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not.

Again; How should such as are in the visible Church of Christ be careful to dwell together in Love? and in this respect perform all things decently, and in Order, without Envy, Strife, Contention, Malice, Hatred, Clamour, Evil-speaking, and the like; remembering that they are Brethren in the same Family, Guest at the same Table, and together make up one and the same Building of God; and should therefore carefully preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the Bonds of Peace, putting on Charity, Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, Forbearing one another, and Forgiving one another; in Conformity to the great Example which Jesus Christ hath set them, of Charity, and Forgiveness; that hereby they may evidence to all Men, that they are His Disciples. For thus said our Lord, *John* xiii. 34, 35. *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

Finally; How peculiarly circumspect should such be in their whole Walk, lest they should defile the House and pollute the Table of the Lord? 'Tis the House and Table of a Holy JESUS they are invited to; and Holiness becomes His House for ever. He also is in His Holy Temple, His Eyes view, and His Eye-lids try the Children of Men; He perfectly knows the Behaviour of them that call themselves the Guest at His Table, and will severely reprimand those that are found without the Wedding Garment, or a Heart and Conversation suitable to their Profession. Surely it must needs be very disagreeable to their Character, and contradictory to the Relation they stand in to the Holy Lord, for
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any of those that are admitted into His House, and to His Table, to allow themselves in any Courses of Unrighteousness, Intemperance, Impurity, and Uncharitableness to Man, or of Impiety and Prophanity to God, and to live like the rest of the vain World. Such as have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, in their Profession of the Christian Religion, certainly ought to walk in Him; to make no Provision for the Flesh to fulfil it in the Lusts thereof, but to live soberly, righteously, and godly, and keep a strict Watch over their Actions, Words, and Thoughts.

2. Is our coming into the Church-state our additional Filling of the House of Jesus Christ? then *what a lamentable thing is it, that there are so many, who refuse or neglect to come to the Holy Supper*, after all the Invitations that have been given to them? Alas! how small is the Number of them that came into the Church of Christ, and became the Guest at this Sacred Feast, compared with those that turn their backs upon the Invitation? Tho' there are a great Number, which no Man can number, that have ventured, upon some Consideration or other, into the Porch of His House, yet the greatest part by far either wilfully neglect, or make light of the Holy Supper of the Lord, which He has instituted in His House; and more yet, it is to be feared, who do not in Sincerity come to that Spiritual Feast which the Gospel invites them to, and the Institutions of Christ give them a Representation of. Thus 'tis said of them, *Math. xxii. 5. They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.* The Necessaries and Conveniencies of their Bodies, make them neglect to approach to the Table of the Lord, that they may feast their Souls and live.

But, indeed, is the Feast which Jesus Christ hath provided, the Table which He hath so richly furnished, the heavenly Dainties He hath prepared for you, to be made thus light of by you? Is any other House and Table equally worth your crowding to? Has the Lord built

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a sumptuous Palace, every way well accommodated to receive you, and for this very end, that the Halt, and the Blind, and the Maimed, and distressed Soul may come freely hither, and find a full Supply for all their various Wants? And is it seemly that you should refuse to give your Attendance, and come for the Blessing? And whither will you go for Shelter and Safety, but into the House of Jesus? as *Noah's* Dove returned to the Ark, as the only Place of Rest for the Sole of her Foot.

Or, can you think that it is no real Grief and Burden to your Ministers, those Servants of Christ that are sent to you, to see you so slighting the gracious Offers of their Lord? Their Heart's Desire and Prayer for you all, is, that you may be saved. And therefore it cannot but be a Matter of great Lamentation and Sorrow to them, to find that you remain so averse to comply with their Message, and that so few have the visible and comfortable Marks of Salvation upon them. Alas! alas! that there are so few comparatively, who make Conscience of coming to the Lord's Table, but so many can content themselves to stay away Year after Year, as if the Salvation provided for them, and there sealed and secured to them, upon their regular Approach to that Gospel-Feast, were not worth their Acceptance; or, as tho' they could fare better out of the Church of Christ, than in it. This is a Lamentation, and will be for a Lamentation!

3. Does Jesus Christ most earnestly desire that His House may be filled? You see then, Brethren, *the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Why does He so earnestly desire this, but that you might reap the Advantage, and partake of the Benefit of it? 'Tis to entertain you, that He has built His House; to feast you, that He has spread His Table; to convey to your Souls the Blessings of His Covenant, His purchased Mercy, even Life for evermore. Is it not infinite Grace and Mercy, that He, who is your Lord, who is so highly exalted above you, yea, above all Principalities and Powers,

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Powers, that *He* should have such a Regard to the lowly, the poor, and such despicable Worms of the Dust as we are? Might you not as easily and justly have been passed by, as fallen Angels are? and could not *He* have overlooked you, as *He* has done many of your Fellow-Creatures, to whom your Gospel is hid? But has *He* taken such pains, as to rear up His Tabernacle among you, to lay in all things necessary and comfortable for your Entertainment, sent His Servants to call you to His Feast, and appointed them to stand in His House ready to wait upon you, to deal forth to every one their Portion in due Season? What astonishing Grace is this!

2 Cor. viii. 9. *Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho' He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye thro' His poverty might be rich.*

4. Has Jesus Christ given His Ministers a Fulness of Power, under Him to manage the Affairs of His House? I might hence infer, the *Honourable Character and Station of His Ministers*. Brethren, we mean *not to stretch our selves beyond our Measure*, in magnifying our Office; yea, *tho' I should boast somewhat more of our Authority, which the Lord hath given us for Edification, yet should I not be ashamed*: For thus *we glory in the Lord*, whose Ministers we are, and *your Servants for Jesus sake*. Is *He not Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*? And can they then by any Rules of Prudence, as well as Justice, be lightly esteemed, and placed as at the Feet of the People, who are His peculiar Servants, and in Commission from Him? Are they entrusted with the Management of the Affairs of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Concerns of Immortal Souls? And is there any Betrustment on Earth equally great and honourable? Whose Commission besides, derives so immediately from so great a Lord? Whose Negotiation and Employment is so high and noble? and whose Power and Authority is equally sure and extensive? But I forbear. Tho' by this we lay no Claim to worldly Titles of Honour, yet surely it becomes you to give them double Honour, who have the

the Rule over you, labouring in the Word and Doctrine, and to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake, (1 Thess. v. 12, 13.) And as their Station is as difficult as it is honourable, and their Labour as weighty as it is noble, so they need the compassionate Assistance of your earnest Prayers, and your most tender Affection, in conjunction with their own Humility, painful Watchfulness, fervent Zeal, patient Labour, and unwearied Supplications.

5. I might from this Doctrine infer, *one distinguishing Mark and Character of the true Church of Christ.* For if it is disagreeable to the Design of Christ, the Spirit of the Gospel, and the Nature of the true Church of Christ, to use external Force and Compulsion to propagate our Holy Religion; then that Church, in which there is the least of such an external Force to be found, all other things consider'd alike, bids the fairest to be a True Church of Christ. For that Church that uses the Helps of wholesome Severities, external Force, to proselyte Persons to their Faith and Manners, in the Worship of God, and is built with the hideous Noise of the destructive Axes and Hammers, is apparently so far destitute of one of the distinguishing Characters of the Church of the peaceful Solomon, and plainly bears upon it the Mark of One that is *Anti* to Him. Since Jesus Christ designed the building up of His Church by the prevailing Force of Reason, under the powerful Influences of His Spirit, to gain a reasonable People to be His willing Subjects; every Man must therefore necessarily be left to judge for Himself, according to the best Light he can receive from the Sacred Scriptures, in all things wherein his Conscience is concerned, without being driven by Fire and Sword, to this or that, which is against the Stimulations of His own Conscience. For so ought every Man to stand fast in the Liberty, wherein Christ has made him free; and he ought to be left to stand or fall to his own master, Rom. xiv. 4. Thus, by the same reason that we are *Protestant Dissenters* from the

the Church of *Rome*, every Man that cannot see with my Eyes must be allowed to dissent from me in Matters of Divine Worship.

And I bless God, this is the Liberty wherein these Churches in this Wilderness stand; without any other imposing of Burdens upon Men, than that of a rational perswading them to a Compliance with that Sacred Worship, and those Holy Rites, which Jesus Christ Himself, the great Head of the Church, has appointed. And I pray God it may always be their Glory, to stand fast in this Liberty; and that we may say of all others, that would introduce an external coercive Power, to force us to what our Master never enjoined us, *O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret; to their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united.* For the claiming a Power to give Law to the Church of Christ, and to have those Laws enforced with proper Sanctions; or for Men to be forced to observe them by Temporal Punishments upon their Persons or Estates, is the top Principle and Character, if not the Dregs of the *Papacy*, and is so far the Mark of the Beast, among whatever Denomination of professing Christians it is found. And indeed such a Characteristick do I take this to be of the true Church of Christ, in conjunction with His Word and Ordinances, that where there are Two Churches, that have the Word and Sacraments of the Gospel dispensed among them with equal Purity; only the one imposing a few Modalities and Rites, the other not imposing, but leaving Men to the Result of their own Consciences; I should choose, as I think every rational and religious Man ought, to come out from that which made use of such an external Force, so contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, and joyn my self to the other, whose Weapons are Prayers, Entreaties, and Arguments enforced from the Word of God: And I should think I have sufficient Warrant for so doing, from that Apostolical Rule, *1 Cor. vi. 12. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any; and that, Gal. ii. 4, 5. False brethren*

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thven ---- came in privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour: --- which at least plainly asserts thus much, that tho' the things may be in themselves lawful, yet the Imposition of them is an usurping upon that Liberty which we have in Christ, and therefore we ought to refuse to be brought into Subjection, or under the Power of them.

6. Hence I might infer the *Wisdom of Jesus Christ in the Christian Institution*. 'Tis the Heart and Soul that He looks for; this He aims at the Salvation of, and this He would have to become subject to Him; and accordingly He demands it of us, *Prov. xxiii. 26. My son, give Me thy heart*. And His Wisdom appears in adapting the whole of the Christian Institution to this End, to work upon the Heart, and Understanding, Will, Affections, and Consciences of Men; to bring these into a Subjection to Him, as well knowing that the Body will be as is the Heart that governs it. He has therefore appointed no external Force to bow and compel the Body, as if he imagined that this would necessarily carry the Determinations of the Heart and Soul with it. The Christian Institution, designing to lead Men into all Holiness, and prepare them for the Happiness of the heavenly World, considers them as rational Creatures, and Holiness and Happiness as the Result of their Option and Choice; and therefore uses all imaginable Argument and Motive to perswade them to a Sense of their Duty and Interest.

Let the Religion of *Mahomet*, which seeks only secular Grandeur, and the Religion of *Rome*, which aims at Power and Riches, add their penal Laws, their Inquisition and the Rack, to compel the Body to attend upon their Rites and Modes; Jesus Christ better understood the Christian Religion, and knowing, that if once the Heart and Will be brought into a Subjection to Him, the Body would naturally pay Him its due Homage, He has therefore aimed at the gaining of this, by such a Compulsion

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Compulsion as is agreeable to the rational Nature of the Man; and all His Laws, all His Encouragements, and all His Threatenings aim at this, and look no further.

7. Lastly; Suffer me now to do the Part which my great Master has assigned me, *even to compel you to come in, that His House may be filled.* For unto me who am less than the least of all Saints is this Grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ; and that for this very End and Purpose, that I might in that Way, which He hath directed me, compel you to come into His House, and to the Royal Feast which He hath prepared for you; that you may be real Christians, and attend upon all His Institutions. And as for those that keep out of the Church-state, and from the Table of the Lord, I would say,

1. I would command you in the King's Name: For Jesus Christ is King of His Church; the Government of the World also is laid upon His Shoulders; and in His Name, I command you to yield a ready, chearful, universal Obedience to Him, and come into His Church, and approach to His Table. You are His Subjects whether you will or no, and He has an undoubted Right to your Service by all imaginable Obligations, by Right of Creation, Preservation, Gubernation, Benefaction, and Redemption; and because He has such a Right to your Service, therefore it is indisputable that you ought to obey Him; and 'tis at your utmost Peril if you do it not. He demands it of you to become the Subjects of His mediatorial Kingdom, and has positively enjoined concerning His Holy Supper, *Luke xxii. 19. Do this in Remembrance of me.* And how dare you to be disobedient to the heavenly Voice?

2. Has not Jesus Christ done enough to allure and constrain you to come into His House and to His

K

Table?

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Table? What an astonishing Obligation is the great Work of Redemption! Has He not loved you, and died for you, that He might wash away your Sins in His own Blood! And what is your coming in to the Church-state, and to the Supper of the Lord? but your receiving His purchased Benefits, the Forgiveness of your Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are sanctified. Is not the Supper of the Lord a Commemoration of His dying Love? a Pledge that He hath left you that His Love was stronger than Death? Is not your Participation thereof a Feasting upon the Sacrifice of Atonement? And a Sealing to you an Interest in the pardoning Mercy of God? And will it not be vile Ingratitude, base Disingenuity in you to slight all of this Love, to despise this Richness of Goodness, and count the Blood of the Covenant as a common and unholy Thing? O! let the Love of Christ constrain you to lay aside all your Opposition to Him, and submit to His Directions and Institutions, that you may receive of His Fulness, and Grace for Grace.

3. Is it possible you should be better accommodated than in the House and at the Table of Christ? Will the Service of the World make amends for the Loss of thy Soul? Will a Drudging in the Service of thy Lusts compensate thy suffering of everlasting Burning! Is any thing more needful for thee than what is to be met with in the House and at the Table of Jesus? Wilt thou not here have sweet Communion with Jesus? Does not the Spirit of Grace wait here ready to be gracious to thee? Is not here Strength of Grace offered to thee, to mortify thy Corruptions, to assist thee in all thy Duties, and support thee under all thy Trials? And hast thou not here a Foretaste of the Joys of Heaven? Canst thou enjoy any Comfort beyond this, or like it? Is not the Covenant of Promise here sealed to thee? And canst thou have

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have any true Comfort while thou absentest thyself herefrom? And is not thy Soul languishing, starving, dying, while thou turnest thy back upon the glorious Feast thou art invited to?

4. I would compel thee, by minding thee of thy former Vows. Hast thou not vowed unto the Lord, and sworn unto the mighty God of *Jacob*? Is not the Vow of thy Baptism upon thee to walk in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord blameless? And canst thou think of thy Baptism, without Horror of Soul at thy broken Vows? Nay, have not many of you renewed your Baptismal Covenant, and thereby brought yourselves under fresh personal Engagements to be the Lord's intirely and without Reserve? And have you so soon forgotten the Word that has gone out of your Mouth? Or dost thou imagine that the Vows of God upon thee are to be sported with? Yea, have you not in Time of Sickness and Danger made your particular Vows, that if God would spare you, you would live more answerable to your Profession, that you would choose the Lord for your God, and wait upon Him at His Holy Table? And will you not be perjured, even to God, if after this thou shouldest lead a vain profane irreligious Life, and turn thy back upon any of the Institutions of Jesus Christ? Think; are all your other Sins so small, that you must needs add this most aggravated Crime of Perjury to them? Or, how do you expect to answer it, in the Day when God shall make Inquisition for broken Vows? Will not the Guilt of Perjury sit heavy upon thy Soul? Surely it will. *Eccl. v. 4, 5. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*

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5. If thou wilfully refuseth to come to the House and Table of the Lord, will not this procure thy Damnation? Jesus Christ will be the Saviour of His People, all that have sincerely given themselves up to Him, and laid hold of His Covenant. But will he be such a Saviour to them that are out of His Covenant? Alas! what Room hast thou to hope for such a Privilege? Where wilt thou find the uncovenanted Mercy of God a Ground of Hope to thee? Or, supposing thou art externally in Covenant with Him; yet what Instance wilt thou find of any that are saved, who continued in a wilful Neglect of any of the Institutions of Jesus Christ? Verily, however it may fare with such as are not able to overcome some Scruples, which are as an invincible Difficulty in their Way, yet as for those who wilfully slight, or carelessly absent themselves from the House and Ordinances of Jesus Christ, they live in open Rebellion against His Sovereignty, and that will most certainly be punished as it deserves, unless timely repented of. For thus the Lord hath said, *Luke xix. 27. As for those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.* Verily such shall have no Benefit by all the Provision which Jesus Christ has made, and now invites them to; for, as *Luke xiv. 24. they shall not taste of my supper.*

6. To conclude; If thou comest to the House and Table of the Lord in Sincerity, if thou become a Christian in Deed, and not in Name only, thou shalt be happy for ever. If thou comest with clean Hands and a pure Heart, Jesus Christ will meet with thee, and sup with thee and thou with Him. Happy then shalt thou be in the Friendship of the great Redeemer, who will take thee under the Shadow of His Wings, and display the Banner of Love over thee.

Happy shalt thou be in this World, under the Conduct of His Providence, the Guidance of His Spirit, and

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and the Assurance of all things working together for thy Good. Happy shalt thou be in the World that is above, in thy Likeness to thy Lord, and in thy Enjoyment of Him. For then will He own them, that are not ashamed to own Him here; He will receive and entertain them as His Guests, at that Royal Banquet, the Marriage of the Lamb, where they shall eat Bread in the Kingdom of God, and drink of the Fruit of the Vine, pure, unmixed, and endless Joy and Satisfaction. For He has said, *John vi. 54. --- My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed; he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him; he hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*





THE
CHRISTIAN HERO:
OR, THE
SAINTS Victory and Rewards.

REV. III. 21.

*To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit
with me, in my throne; even as I also over-
came, and am set down, with my Father in
his throne.*



HIS Book of the Revelation to
St. John, seems to have two
great Designs chiefly in view;
namely, the forming of particu-
lar Persons, for the happy Re-
wards of the future World; and
the leading the catholick visible
Church of Christ, thro' all its
various Periods, Changes, and
Labours, to the glorious Rest of the *Millennium*, the
thousand Years Reign on Earth, wherein the Glories of
the

The Saints Victory, &c. 79

the Kingdom of Christ, the great Head of the Church, in the established Peace and Purity of it, and her Triumph over all that rise up against her, will be more evident and conspicuous than ever yet has been.

This latter Design takes up the greatest Part of this Book, which is therefore chiefly prophetick; and, as the Prophecies often are, enigmatical; and consequently is such an unfathomable Depth, that 'tis no Wonder if the tallest Capacities find themselves immersed and lost, when they attempt to sound the Bottom of these Divine Mysteries. Hence 'tis that we may observe so vast a Disagreement among the best and ablest Expositors; the several Epocha's, and Periods of Time, so uncertainly and diversely fixed on by them; the Enigma's and Allegories so variously unriddled, the Prophecies so differently explained, and such wide and almost contrary Applications, of what is already become History, to a particular Prophecy.

Yet I doubt not, but that the nearer we come to the End, the same Spirit, that first shewed these Mysteries to His Servant *John*, will gradually unfold them unto others, and the Light will shine more and more unto the perfect Day. And it may be very few, in this Age, have been enabled to make further Advancements towards the setting of these Prophecies in a clear Light, than the great *Noyes* (late of *Salem* in *New England*) after many Years close Study, by Divine Assistance, has done in the Manuscripts left behind him.

But to return: The first Design in View, and what more nearly concerns us, is, as I said, the forming of particular Persons for the happy Rewards of the future World. This gives Rise to the several Epistles directed to the seven famous Churches of *Asia*, and in them to the whole professing Christian World; wherein we have the illustrious Head and Leader of the Christian Church, after a beautiful and magnificent Description of His Person and Glories, and Publication of His Royal Commission and Authority, addressing Himself to His Follow-
ers

ers with all the Mildness of a Friend and Majesty of a Sovereign, commending what is virtuous and laudable, and reproving what is sinful and irregular among them, and ascertaining the glorious Rewards to all that will faithfully adhere to His Service. *To him that overcometh, &c.* Where we have

I. Something supposed; *viz.* that as Christians we have our Enemies to encounter withal. *He that overcometh*: if there were none to oppose, nor any to contend with, how or whom should he overcome? Victory and Conquest infers, that there were some who heretofore have stood in Opposition to us some Way or other, but now are reduced and subdued under us: How shall he conquer, who never had an Enemy to contend with and struggle for the Mastery? Or he be allowed a Triumph, who never was in the Field of Battle?

2. We have something asserted; *viz.* that the Overcomer shall be certainly and gloriously rewarded: *He shall sit with me in my Throne, &c.* The Greatness of the Reward is specify'd by his *sitting with Christ in His Throne*; only remember, that in the Throne Christ will be the Chief (a); and the Certainty of the Rewards is established with little short of an Oath, *even as I* (not only in like Manner, but as sure as I) *also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His Throne.*

Agreeably, 'tis a Doctrinal Truth,

Doctr. That *to him that overcometh, Christ Jesus will grant to sit with Him in His Throne; even as He also overcame, and is set down with His Father in His Throne.*

In the Prosecution of this Doctrine, I shall take this plain and natural Method; *viz.*

I. Enquire, who and what are the Enemies that are to be overcome.

II. Shew when we may be said to overcome them, or wherein the Saints Victory does consist.

III. Shew, whence 'tis that the Christian is enabled to overcome and obtain the Victory.

IV. Evidence;

(a) *Sic tamen ut semper eminent Caput Christus.* Beza in Loc.

IV. Evidence, That those who do overcome, shall sit with Christ in His Throne, as He overcame, and is set down, with his Father, in his Throne.

V. And then make some application of the whole.

I. The First thing then is, To enquire, *who or what are the Enemies, that the Christian is to maintain a Conflict with and overcome.*

Now in answer to this Enquiry, we need only to consider our selves as professed Christians, in a state of Exercise and Discipline; and this will presently shew us, who we are to look upon as our enemies, wage a continual war with, and finally overcome.

For surely, whatever bears the least Opposition to our peculiar Character and Glory as Christians, may very justly be looked upon, as Inimical to us, and as such ought to be treated by us, with an agreeable Warmth of Spirit, fervent Indignation, and resolute Contest; that, if possible, we may obtain the victory over it, and not suffer it to strip us, of what we ought to esteem so dear and valuable.

'Tis the Christian's peculiar Character; (and therefore does he wear that holy Name,) to be of a God-like Temper and Disposition of Mind, to partake of the Divine Nature (a), in the spiritual holy heavenly Frame of his Soul, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost (b), and the Grace of Christ formed in him (c), subjecting of him to the Rules and Laws of Christ, as his great Master (d), and conforming of him to the Pattern of Christ, as his bright Exemplar (e).

'Tis the Christian's peculiar Privilege, the Foundation of his Comfort, and his Encouragement under all the Difficulties he is called to conflict with all, to be interested in the Divine Favour (f), to be under the special Conduct of Divine Providence (g), to have the Presence of the di-

vine

(a) 2 Pet. 1. 4. (b) Eph. 4. 23. (c) Gal. 4. 19. (d) Joh. 13. 13. (e) 1 Joh. 2. 6. (f) Psal. 6. 12. (g) Psal. 25. 9, 12.

vine Spirit with him (a), to have freedom of Access unto the Father (b), to be numbred among the Children of God (c), and to have a fair prospect of the heavenly and immortal World (d), (the Life, and Immortality brought to light, by the Gospel of Jesus Christ,) which his vaster Hopes, founded upon the great and precious Promises of the Gospel persuade him of (e), and now hold in Reverſion (f), till he shall come to the full Poſſeſſion of the incorruptible Crown, at the end of his State of Probation (g).

And 'tis the peculiar Honour and Glory of the Chriſtian, to live up to the Height of his Character, to maintain the Dignity of his Name and Style, and to aſſert and defend the Intereſt and Honour of his great Lord and Maſter; to aſſume his Rights, to claim his Privileges, to walk answerable to his high and holy Calling, and aſt under the continual Influence of his enlarged Expectations.

Now, whatever has a Tendency, tho' but in the leaſt Meaſure and Degree, to ſully the Chriſtian's Character, to deprive him of his Privileges, and ſtain his Glory, theſe are juſtly to be accounted his grand Enemies, whom he is to maintain a perpetual war with, and overcome, as ever he would preſerve his Name, Intereſt, and Honour.

And becauſe 'tis plain, The Chriſtian's Character, Privilege, and Glory, are all of a Spiritual Nature, being after the Spirit, and bearing the image of the Heavenly; hence, whatſoever is fleſhly and carnal, ſenſual and earthly, that would prevent his answering to his Title, and forfeit his Claim to his expected Felicity, this ſtands in direct Oppoſition to him, and is his profeſſed Enemy; and hence ariſes the Conteſt, the Spirit ever ſtrugling to regain it's Rights, and maintain its juſt Aſcendency over the Fleſh, in a due Government of all the lower Appetites and Paſſions, and a rational and religious Subjection of the whole Man, and all the Concernments thereof, to the Dictates of a lightened Mind, and to the Direction and Guidance

(a) *Rom.* 8. 14.(b) *Eph.* 2. 18.(c) *1 Joh.* 3. 2.

(d)

2 *Cor.* 4. 18.(e) *Tit.* 1. 2.(f) *Heb.* 6. 18.(g) 2 *Tim.* 4. 8.

Guidance of the clear Revelations, which God hath made of his Mind and Will to us, in his holy Oracles; while, on the other hand, the Flesh as constantly denies the Claims of the Spirit, and strives to deprive her of them, and exerts it self to the utmost, to uphold an usurped Authority, and enslave the high born Soul, in all its Operations, to the mean Drudgery of an universal Obsequiousness to its sensual Gratifications. Hence the Apostle tells us, of a *Law in our members, warring against the Law in our minds*, (Rom. vii. 23.) and, (Gal. v. 17.) that, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.*

So that, in short, whatsoever would hinder us from being real Christians, and acting as such, in every inward Frame of the Mind, and in all our outward Deportment and Behaviour, in the Duties of Religion towards our God, or of Justice and Charity towards Man; whatsoever would make us contented with the Name, without the Life and Power of Godliness, and satisfied with the profession, without any well grounded Hopes of the Rewards of Religion; whatever be their Name, Style, and Denomination, the Livery they wear, the Colours they appear under, and the Pretences they may make of Love and Friendship, 'tis certain, they are really at the Bottom, our worst Enemies.

And surely now 'tis easy, from this Prospect of Affairs, to take at least, a general view, of the Number and Strength of the Adversary; to know who they are, and what are their baneful Designs upon us; and to be something apprised of their Subtilty, Malice and Rage, the Fierceness and Cruelty of their Disposition, the Closeness of their Counsels, and the manner of their Approaches.

For certainly, we must be very little attentive to ourselves, and less acquainted with our Character and Hopes, not to perceive a busy Devil, a corrupt Heart, and a deceitful World, with their numerous Troops, in a sworn Confederacy against us, and perpetually prosecuting their grand Design upon us; one while by Storm and Violence, like an open Enemy; anon, under the Covert of Friend-

ship, treacherously laying their Ambuscades for us; and as often, when and where we least of all expect it, secretly undermining, and attempting to sap the Foundation of our Faith and Virtue, and bury our joyful Hopes in the fatal Ruin.

These are the ghostly Enemies, which every true Christian, with utmost Vigour and Resolution of Soul, engages in a War with; remembering that he is to fight, not as one that beats the Air, but as contending with Principalities and Powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places: and it becomes the Nobility of his Descent, the Dignity of his Profession, and his strong Engagements, to be always in Exercise, never to quit the Field and give over the Combate, till by the superiour Grace of Christ assisting of him, he comes off a glorious Conqueror. Which introduces me to the second Thing proposed, *viz.*

II. To shew, *when we may be said to overcome, or wherein the Saints Victory does consist.* Here then,

I. It cannot reasonably be supposed, that the true Christian should be a compleat Conqueror, while in this World. For a perfect and intire victory seems incompatible to a State of Action and Conflict, which is the Christian's Condition while in this world. Hence our Saviour said, (*John xvi. 33.*) *In the World ye shall have Tribulation.* There is no expecting of an uninterrupted Rest, and a compleat Freedom, from the various Tryals, Temptations and Rencounters, which a frail Body and a weak Mind, a mutable World, and our very Profession, always exposes us to, thro' the whole of the present Life; and there is none so little acquainted with the Nature of the humane Constitution, and the Duties of the Christian Religion, but what knows, that the whole Time of his Continuance in the Body, is an entire Series of Discipline and Probation; and that consequently while he is here, he is forever in a militant State, and his condition is that of a Warriour, as yet striving for the Mastery, and contending for the Prize (a): He is as yet but in a State of Hope

and

(a) *Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14.*

and Expectation, and not of Enjoyment; and therefore must be content to wait (a), till his Time of Tryal is at an End, e'er the War will be over with him, when he shall be conducted to his native Home, to obtain the Triumph, and receive the Crown.

Tho' the Christian may get the Advantage of his spiritual Enemies, in this or that particular Skirmish and Encounter, (enough to elate his Hopes, and give him some Foretaste of the Joys of Victory,) yet the Conquest is not compleat, nor he the Conqueror, untill the Foe is entirely beaten out of the Field, unable to rally, and make Head against him any more. And can this be expected, as long as he lives in a World, where he converses with nothing belonging to it, but what has its more immediate Impression and Operation upon his Senses, and stirs up the Sensations of Pleasure or Pain, Joy or Sorrow, in him; and therefore most strongly engages his Senses, and his lower Appetites and Passions in it's Interest, and so affords new Matter and fresh Occasion of Temptation to him? Can he supposed to be beyond the Reach of an Adversary, so long as he carries about with him *a Body of Death* (b), the Remainders of Corruption in him, which lays him open to every new Temptation, and is ready to betray him into the Hands of Enemies? No surely, the Christian will sadly experience, that he no sooner escapes from the Jaws of the roaring Lyon, but a ranging Bear stands ready to seize upon him, and one Temptation will succeed upon the back of another, calling for a new exerting of his spiritual Conduct and Vigour, that he may be able to hold out to the End; so that he must not think of laying down his Arms, as tho' the Adversary was put to a perpetual Rout, and the War were at an utter end.

When the Christians shall arrive at the heavenly World, then indeed, he will be entirely out of the Reach of all his ghostly Enemies; then he will be wholly divested of all that is carnal and sensual; he will be above the Impressions

(a) Rom. 8. 24, 25.

(b) Rom. 7. 24.

ons of a vain World, and breath in too pure an Air for the infernal Spirits to approach him; then his Character will be maintained in its Splendor, his Privileges will be possessed to the full, without the Hazard of a Forfeiture, nor can there possibly be any thing there to tarnish his Glory: but in the mean while, he must consider himself, as still in the Field of Battle, and be content to stand to his Arms; and if he take some Refreshment, and think of a little Repose, after a long and a toilsome Conflict, it must be without the least Security or Glorifying, as tho' the Harness was put off; with a constant Guard, and ready Armed, as expecting a new and fierce Assault, from a restless and impetuous Adversary. And then,

2. It is rather to be wished than hoped, that the Christian should always come off a *Conquerour in every single Combate* with his spiritual Enemies. For what thro' the Number, Strength and Policy of the Enemy, the Restlessness of their Malice, the Impetuosity of their Rage and Fury, the Unweariedness of their Attempts, and their continual fresh Recruits; and what thro' the Inadvertency and Negligence, the Weakness and Rashness of the Christian, 'tis no wonder if sometimes the Enemy get the Advantage of him, and either by Surprise, overpowering of him, or wearying of him out, foil him for the present. For there is no Christian so strong, but what has his weak part, so vigilant, but may be sometimes off from his Guard, nor so vigorous and active, but may at Times have his Spirits ready to fail him; and the subtle Adversary, who is upon the Watch for every little Advantage, will know how to improve his Opportunity against him, so as sometimes to get the better of him.

Hence are the many Errors and Failings of the Best of Men, and there is not a Just man upon Earth that sinneth not (a): hence we find an holy Paul crying out, *Rom. vii. 23, 24. O wretched Man that I am! who shall deliver me from this Body of Deash? The Law in my Members*

bers, warring against the Law in my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in my Members; hence also we find the Champion of Israel crying out of his *broken Bones* (a), as of the Wounds of an Enemy. And who is there, that in the Course of his Life, has not oftentimes Occasion to go mourning, and walk in the Bitterness of his Soul, because of the Oppression of the Adversary and the Foe?

In short it would not be suitable to a state of Probation, to be wholly invulnerable, and susceptible of no Impressions from an Adversary; (tis eno' for his Encouragement, that the Wounds of the Christian shall not prove Mortal,) and therefore we may not expect it in the most accomplished Christian, that in all the many Conflicts, the more than Herculean Labours, he is called to engage in, he should never suffer any Disadvantages from the Enemy; but we may rationally conclude, that the Seed of the Serpent will sometime wound him in the Heel, and make him to go halt and cripple for a long Time after. But then,

3. The Christian is then an Overcomer, when with a generous Disdain and an unshaken Firmness of Mind, *he casts off his former easy Subjection to his usurping Foes*; and with assiduous Vigilance, fixed Resolution, and unwearied Application, he disappoints the grand Designs of his Enemies; and thro' the Course of his Warfare, resolutely maintains his Ground, keeps his Integrity, and will not be drawn away from God and his Duty, whatever be the Opposition he meets with, or their Endeavours to tempt him therefrom. Then does he overcome, when he holds fast his Righteousness, and will not let it go; when he perseveres in a steady Allegiance to his rightful Sovereign, and constantly pursues the noble Ends he has in view; when the repeated Attempts of the Enemy, and the Wounds they may give him, are so far from making him to give over the Combate, and yield himself an easy Captive

(a) *Psalm*. 51. 8.

Captive in Chains, couching down under their Usurpation and Tyranny, that it does but so much the more fire his Blood, inflame his Zeal, strengthen his Resolutions, quicken his Diligence, and awaken him to the greater Circumspection and Watchfulness for the Time to come, and so animates his Courage, and redoubles his Fortitude, as to make him a real Gainer by all his Losses; that he can say with the Church, *Mic. vii. 7, 8, 9. Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in Darkness, the Lord shall be a Light unto me; therefore I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my Salvation, --- until He plead my cause, --- and bring me forth to the Light, and I shall behold his Righteousness.*

So 'tis remarked of the glorious *K. William. III.* That tho' he generally lost the Battle, yet he almost always got the better.

And thus the Apostle glories in the victorious *Corinthians*, who by the Wounds they had received from the Enemy, became but so much the more watchful and resolute for the Future; *2 Cor. vii. 11. Behold, this self-same thing--- what Carefulness it wrought in you yea, what clearing of your selves, yea, what Indignation, yea, what Fear, yea, what vehement Desire, yea, what Zeal, yea, what Revenge.*

Here then I shall a little particularize the Christian's Victory over his spiritual Enemies. And,

1. He maintains a War with, and overcomes *Carnal corrupt self*, with its various lustings and irregular Passions, which war against the Soul. Fain would this vain Idol be set up as the supream Object of our Adorations, as tho' we owed all our Obedience, and Servitude to so mean a Pretender; and great is the Danger we are in, from it's Claims of near Affinity and Kindred with us; it's specious shews of disinterested Friendship, and sincere Kindness to us, of our being won over to it's Party, engaging in it's Interest, and subjecting our selves to it's Influence and Government.

Here therefore, the Christian is upon his Guard; and having taken the Oath of Allegiance to Christ as his right-
full

full and Sovereign Lord, he bends his Force against the artfull Demands of this insinuating Usurper, and wisely improves the Weapons of his Warfare, to beat down these touring Thoughts, and vain Imaginations, crucifying this Old-Man, with its Affections and Lusts (a).

And his great Care is to *Live not unto himself, but unto the Lord* (b): that is he does not live, as tho' he were made for Himself, and had no higher Ends and Purposes than the serving of self, and promoting the Advantage and Interest of the Flesh; as he remembers he is made for Service of God, and the Advancement of the Divine Glory: and therefore hither refers the Improvement of all the Faculties of his Soul, and Powers of his Body that he may glorify God in his Body, and in his Spirit, which are the Lords; and he conscientiously makes his Name, Estate, Relations and Capacities, all subservient to the promoting this great End, as a faithful servant lays out all his Strength and Time in the pursuit of his Master's Interest (c). Thus *whether he eats, or drinks, or whatsoever he does, he endeavours to do all to the Glory of God*; as we are taught by the Apostle, 1 Cor. x. 31.

He is conscious to himself, that his reasonable and social Nature capacitates him for an extensive Usefulness, so as to render him, in some measure, a common Benefactor, in this world; (as well as fits him for the Society of the Blessed above:) and therefore he endeavours to proportion his Desires and Views, his Intentions and Labours, to the Good of the Community, in Conjunction with his own, that he may not prove a Drone in the Hive, an unprofitable Member in the Commonwealth. And thus he takes a more steady, safe, and honourable way, to secure his own Interest, and reap a truly rational Satisfaction, in the Review of his Conduct, than Covetousness, Pride, Ambition, Envy, and Revenge, can ever direct him to.

It

(a) Gal. 5. 24. (b) Rom. 14. 7, 8. (c) *Non ad nostrum Usus et commodum precipue, sed ad Dei Obsequium vivimus, -- sicut Servi omnia sua, in Dominorum suorum Usus et Commodum referre solent, & debent.* a Lapid. in Rom. 14. 7.

It was an old Observation, among the Heathen, *That no Man is born for himself*; and the true Christian hath learned to despise so sordid and vain a Creature as Self, to uphold a generous and extensive Love to Mankind, agreeable to the Christian Law of Love; which requires him, to love his God supremely, and *his Neighbour, as Himself*; *Math. xxii. 37, 39.* And therefore in all his Labour and Employment, he consults not his own Advantage only, but that of his Neighbours also (a), that others may fare the better for him; and he crushes under his Feet the mishapen monstrous Brood of so bloated a Parent as Self-love.

He hath made some Progress in the mysterious Art, the Divine Lesson of self denial (b), and, (as the Apostle expressed it, in the Original, with an Elegancy which our Language will by no means reach to (c), *Rom. xii. 3.*) he hath learned, *not to think of himself, more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly*, i. e. he does not look upon himself as wiser than all the World besides, and to set up his Will as the Law, to govern the rest of Mankind by, in their Volition and Choice, in their Faith and Manners, as tho' he were sole Lord of the intellectual world; but he allows to his Neighbours the same Right of Judging for themselves, which he takes to be his; and will no more impose, than he will be imposed upon, and meekly supposes that others may see as far, and as clearly as himself. Hence he can pay a just Deference to his Superiors, whom God hath placed over him, in the State, and in the Church; knows how to treat his Equals and Inferiors, without Contempt, and Insult; and will not readily kindle into a Flame, much less become an Incendiary to others, that he, (forsooth,) is not advanced as Head over all, that his Disputes are not hearkened to, his supposed wise Counsels followed, and the Result of his Thoughts made the Standard of his Neighbours Actions. He doaths himself

(a) *Phil. 2. 4.* (b) *Luke. 9. 23.* (c) *Μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν τὴν εἰς ἑαυτὸν ὀψιν.*

himself with Meekness and Humility, is little in his own Eyes, rejoices in the Prosperity of others, and can well bear to see his Neighbour preferred before him.

The true Christian takes Pains to suppress the *inordinate Lustings* of corrupt self, and to moderate all his Appetites and Cravings, that he may not be hurried, by the impetuous Force of his own lawless Desires, to trespass upon the Rights of his Maker, or his Neighbour; and he wisely learns to keep his Desires within the Bounds, which the Law, and Providence of God hath assigned to him. It was the Advice of *Epictetus*, as quoted by a modern Author, *if things are not directly as you would have them, be content that they should be as they are, and you will live easy.* One of the greatest Reasons of our enlarging our Desires, beyond due Bounds, is from the Caprice of our Humours, which vainly dance after every new Object, that is presented to our Imagination; and measures our Happiness, not by the Bounty of Providence to us, in the Supply of our real Wants, but by a false View of our imaginary ones; and in comparing our Condition with that of others, whom we think happier than ourselves. Hence the above mentioned modern Author well observes (a), “ The greatest Cause of Discontent is, “ that Men have no definite Measure of their Desires; “ ’tis not the Supply of all their real Wants will serve “ their Turn; their Appetites are precarious, and depend “ upon Contingencies; they hunger, not because they “ are empty, but because others are full. But the Christian hath been taught from above to mortify the Lusts of Concupiscence, and keep the wandring Desires of his Mind within the Limits of Reason and Religion; and he endeavours to conform himself to that excellent Advice of the Apostle, *Heb. xiii. 5. Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: and hence it is, that he is pure, chaste, temperate, and sober in his Behaviour.*

He suppresses also the *irascible Passions*; keeps under his
 Resent,

(a) *Gent. Libr. p. 371*

Relentments, either as supposed, or real Injuries, Affronts and Indignities; and puts away all lawless Anger, Malice, Wrath, Clamour, and Evil-speaking, especially of Dignities, in Things which he knows not; and is gentle, kind, courteous, affable, beneficent, and easy to be entreated; and so by the Exercise of these, and such like Virtues and Graces, he overcomes the Lustings and Passions of carnal self. And a noble Conquest 'tis; for as the wise Man observes, *Prov. xvi. 32. He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a City.* Blood and Slaughter is the common Lot of a City taken; whereas he that ruleth his Spirit, tho' the Conflict is more heavy and burdensome to him, yet in the Conclusion, he will find, that he hath done himself more good, and a greater Service to Mankind, in the Mastery over his Passions, than by the greatest Slaughter of outward Enemies; and so much better therefore is he, than the most successful Warrior, by how much the Strength and Rage of the Brute, which is sufficient to destroy, is exceeded by the superior Intellect and Genius, which is necessary to preserve.

And sure I am, when Self comes to be less sought, and more subdued, the Christian World will better understand, and practise the apostolical Directions, both in State and Church, *Rom. xiii. 1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; Tit. iii. 1, 2. Be subject to principalities and powers, obey magistrates, be ready to every good work, speak evil of no man, be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men; and Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.* If these Laws of the Gospel were observed, as they should be, we should not so often see the State, and the Church, in Danger of being torn to Peices, by the Wills and Lusts of Men; who have no higher Views then Self Gratification; nor any better Principles to govern them, than Pride and Ambition, Malice and Envy, Wrath and Covetousness; all of them the natural Product of corrupt Self; by which they forfeit the Christian Name, and I
had

had almost said, the Rights of humane Society.

If the Danger I have been ready to fear we are in, of having, (not only particular Christians make Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, by the secret, but powerful Attempts of this common Enemy, but) our civil, and ecclesiastical Constitution, and Privileges, thrown into the utmost Confusion and Ruin, by a sordid, perverse, selfish Spirit, attended with a long Train of Pride, Arrogancy, Haughtiness, Willfulness, Fierceness, Rage, Clamour, Evil-speaking, Lying, and the like; I say, if this melancholy Prospect has made me dwell more largely upon this Head; (as I am sure, I have kept within the Line of my Order, and Duty, in what I have said, so) I have but done the Part of a faithful Watchman, in sounding an Alarm, and giving Warning, from what Quarter the Enemy is making his most formidable Approaches upon us. And would to God, that every Man would begin with himself, without Reflection upon his Neighbours, to repair the wast Places in the decayed Wall, and then vigorously defend it; and so disappoint the Design, and prevent the threaten'd Danger. I pass to say,

2. The Christian maintains a War with, and *overcomes the World*, the Men, and Things of it, with their Affections and Lusts.

1. He steadily resists, and overcomes the *Men* of this World, in their Designs upon his Faith and Virtue. Here the Christian is attacked with the ill Example of Vice and Immorality, Intemperance, Debauchery, Prophaneness, and every evil Work: and because there are such huge Numbers crowding along in the common Road, and so many of Name, and Figure, in the Eye of the World, leading the Van, thro' all the dirty Ways, and vile Manners of prevailing Custom; the Christian is often put to a Stand, and finds it a great Difficulty for him to endure the Shock, and resist the Torrent, which is ready to carry all before it.

But however, he arms himself with the greater Constancy and Intrepidity of Mind, and is not ashamed, nor afraid to stand alone, like *Elijah* (a), the Asserter of the true

(a) 1. Kings 18. 22.

God of Israel, and Defender of the Faith, in Opposition to the strong Current of the Worshippers of Baal, and remains immoveably stedfast to the Interest of his Lord, and obsequious to his Commands. Tho' in the Esteem of the World, Precept is of little Force, in Comparison with the general Practice of Mankind, yet he is carefull to govern all his Actions by Rule, and fetches the Measure of his Thoughts and Behaviour, not from an Observation of the Conduct of the confused Herd of Mankind, but from the Law and the Testimony; and whoever speaks and acts not according to this Word, he esteems their Walk to be in Darknes, and their Path dangerous (a). He carefully guards against the Danger, and prudently shuns the Infection of bad Company, as knowing the Destruction that awaits the Companion of Fools; and tho' he cannot, without taking his final Leave of the World, be wholly a Stranger to the wicked of the Earth, nor altogether unobservant of the prevailing evil Customs of his Age, yet he takes up a fixed Resolution not to come into their Secret, nor to be joyned to their Assembly, nor will he by any means, be drawn to follow a Multitude to do Evil (b). He sets before him, the illustrious Example of the great Head of the Christian Religion, and those holy Men of God, that have gone before him; who have been famous in their Days, for Piety, and Charity, and he endeavours an Imitation of them, according to the Apostle's Direction, (1 Cor. xi. 1.) *so far as they have followed Christ*. In a Word, he sets himself to confront the prophane and immoral Practices of the Time and Place he lives in, by giving, in his own Life, a bright Example of all the practical Duties of Religion and the social Virtues; that if possible he may put Vice and Immorality out of Countenance, by the Lustre of a well ordered Conversation, rendering him as a Light in the World; that others beholding his good Works, may be attracted by the Force and Power thereof,

to

(a) *Isa.* 8. 20.(b) *Exod.* 23. 2.

to turn their Feet into the Paths of Virtue, and with him, *glorify our Father which is in Heaven* (a).

On the one hand ; he is enticed by the deluding Siren, with a beautifull Countenance and a smooth Tongue, attended with all the Charms of professed Love and Friendship, soothing his Vanity, and palliating his Errors, artfully winding herself into his good Opinion, and improving the Advantage of his Weakness, his natural Self-Love, and his universal Philanthropy, that if possible he may be taken in the Snare, *which he that flattereth his Neighbour, spreadeth for his Feet* (b). But the true Christian examines and tries all Things, that he may hold fast that which is good ; and lest this gay and easy Appearance should seize him at unawares, and lull him asleep, with her harmonious Song, in a supine Neglect of his Duty, or an indolent Compliance with any vicious Custom. He makes a Covenant with his Eyes, and stops his Ears against the enchanting Sound, and firmly resolves with himself, that if Sinners entice him, he will not consent ; and the biggest Pretensions of Friendship shall not persuade him to break Friendship, with God and his own Heart.

On the other hand ; he may be assaulted with the bent Brow, the wrathful Eye, and the fierce Countenance, breathing out Threatning and Slaughter, for his steady Perseverance in the pure Ways of Religion, and his Fidelity to God, and his own Conscience. But as he could not be corrupted with a formal Shew of Kindness, nor bribed with Flatteries, and fair Promises, so neither will he be scared, and driven from his Duty to God, and his own Soul, by the blackest Terrors, a *Nebuchadnezzar* can appear in, nor the hideouslest Torments his wrathful Malice and Rage can invent. He knows, that when *Men have killed the Body*, there is no more that they can do, *they are not able to kill the Soul : But God is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell :* and therefore *he fears God*, rather than Man (c), being satisfied, that it is a terrible Thing

(a) *Matth.* 5. 16.(b) *Prov.* 29. 5.(c) *Matth.* 10. 28.

Thing to fall into Hands of the living God; while the Fury of the Oppressor is vain, his Breath goeth forth, and that Day all his Thoughts of Cruelty perish. Hence should he be forbidden, under the severest Penalty, to worship his God, according to the Dictates of his Conscience, and the Directions of the divine Oracles; or should he be commanded, at the Peril of his Estate or Life, to worship an unknown God, or the true God with false Worship, he would reply with the Apostles, when they were commanded not to teach in the Name of Jesus, *Acts. v. 29. We ought to obey God, rather than Man.* And tho' he might be ready, after the first Surprise, to startle at the severe Edict, and stagger at the ghastly Appearance of dying, accompanied with the grizled Terrors of a stinking and darksome Jail, Chords and the Wrack, the Gibbet or the Stake; yet he soon recovers himself from his Fright, and with a truly heroick Spirit, submits himself to the cruelty of penal Laws; and with *Daniel (a)* encounters the Fury of the hungry Lions, or with the *three Children (b)* sustains the Fierceness of the sevenfold heated Furnace, rather than renounce the Service of the true God, for the Service of vain Idols, knowing *the God in whom he trusts, is able to deliver him.* Thus does he triumph over the Men of this World, their Customs and Manners, their Promises and Threatenings; none of these shall move him, nor does he count his Life dear, so he may finish his Course with Joy, and win the Crown prepared for him.

2. The Christian steadily resists, and finally overcomes the Opposition he meets with from the *Things* of this World. As now,

1. He overcomes the Assaults he meets with from *worldly Riches.* These, we are ready to think, are good, and the more of them the better; and under the Pretension of Necessity, and Conveniency, we are in
Danger

(a) *Dan. Chap. 6.*

(b) *Dan. Chap. 3.*

Danger of enlarging our Desires, and giving such a Scope to our Labours after them, that 'tis well, if by *making haste to be rich, we do not fall into a snare, and divers foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition*; as the Apostle tells us, *1 Tim. vi. 9.* And when we have compassed our Desires, and grasped an Abundance of this World's Good, there is Hazard left we make it our God, and think now our Mountain stands strong, and we shall never be moved. For he that hath set his Heart upon Riches, and given them the Predominancy in his Affections, hath exchanged the living Jehovah for an Idol of Silver or Gold; agreeably our Saviour tells, *Matth. vi. 24. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon**: The Love of the World for ever banishes the Love of the Father out of the Heart (a); and he is as truly the Idolater, that has his Heart full of the World, as he that bows down to a graven Image (b).

But the true Christian overcomes these Assaults, by moderating his Appetites and Desires after Things here below, and conforming his Temper to *Agur's* Petition, *Prov. xxx. 8. Remove from me vanity and lies, give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me.* He is in the Pursuit of a more solid and lasting Treasure, than any of the shining Oar or glittering Gems, which this World can present him withal, even durable Riches and Righteousness, and a glorious Inheritance in Heaven; to the Attainment whereof he bends his Thoughts, employs his Skill, and lays out his Strength, that, by any means, he may be sure of a Portion equal to his Wishes, every Way satisfactory and able to render him completely and for ever happy. And while he has this glorious Prize in his View, he can look down with Contempt upon the fullest Splendor of the World, and see Vanity inscribed upon the gilded Palaces, the lofty
N Towers,

* *Fieri etenim non potest, ut quis Deo fruatur, & simul inordinate appetat res hujus vite. Stella de Cont. Mund. p. 7.*

(a) *2 John 11, 15.* (b) *Col. 3. 5.*

Towers, the magnificent Buildings, and the amassed Treasures of Kings ; and remain unmoved, unless with Pity, at the Sight of the gay, but empty Bubble dancing its uncertain Rounds, with a vast but silly Crowd greedily catching at the airy Phantom.

Hence he has an utter Abhorrence of the Gains of Unrighteousness, Oppression, and Sacrilege ; and no Prospect of encreasing his Stores will be sufficient to prevail upon him, knowingly to play the Part of a Robber upon his Neighbour, by an unjust Sute, unequal Weights, and a false Reckoning, or by preying upon his Ignorance and Weakness, his Necessity or Credulity, nor by falsifying his Trust, either to the living or the dead. But he is a true Man, honest in his Dealings, stanch to his Promise, faithful to his Betrustments, and esteems his *little with righteousness, better than great revenues without right.* Prov. xvi. 8. “ He is rightly honest, “ and looks not to what he might do, but what he “ should do. Justice is his first Guide, and the second “ Law of his Actions is Expedience. He had rather “ complain than offend, and hates Offence more for the “ Indignity of it, than the Danger. — All his Deal- “ ings are square and above-board ; he discovers the “ Fault of what he would sell, restores the overseen “ Gain of a false Reckoning, and esteems a Bribe veno- “ mous, tho’ it come gilded over with the Colour of “ Gratuity : His Cheeks are never stained with the “ Blushes of Recantation ; nor does his Tongue falter “ to make good a Lye, with the secret Glosses of dou- “ ble or reserved Senses — he hates Falshood worse than “ Death, — and if there were no Heaven, yet would “ he be virtuous *.

What of this World’s Goods it pleases God to bestow upon him, he receives as his *Viaticum*, and is thankful for the Portion which is allotted him ; and his next Care is, not to squander it away upon his Lusts, to pamper his
Pride

Pride and Luxury, or fulfill the Desires of the Flesh in Chambering and Wantonness, in Rioting and Drunkenness; but to remember that he is but a Steward of the manifold Gifts of God, and so to improve all that he has, as that, like a wise and faithful Servant, he may make proportionable Returns to his bountiful Master, and God may have a Revenue of Glory from him (a).

And if he have much given him, he hoards not up his Stores to be devoured by the Rust, like the unprofitable Servant, nor reserves them to feast his Eye upon, with the despicable Miser, who brings his Fears upon him, and starves in the midst of Plenty; but he looks upon himself as under the greater Obligations to do so much the more for the Honour of his Lord and Master; by rendering to Cesar the things that are Cesar's (b), tribute to whom tribute is due, chearfully bearing the Weight of publick Charges, for the Defence, Support, and Honour of the Government which God hath appointed over him; by laying out a suitable Part of his Incomes for the Maintenance of the House and Worship of God, and the comfortable and honourable Support of His Ministers that wait at the Divine Altar (c); by diffusing his Charity at the utmost Distance, as the Providence of God calls him thereto, for the spreading of Christian Knowledge, and the Advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in the World (d); and he forgets not the Poor that wait daily at his Doors to receive their Portion at his Hands, and call him Blessed (e). Thus does he honour the Lord with his Substance, and the first Fruits of his Encrease: And this he does, not with a slack Hand and a niggardly Spirit, as begrutching all that is laid out in the Service of God, for the Interest of his Kingdom, and the Support of his Poor; but with a chearful Countenance, an open Hand, and a liberal

(a) Matth. 25. 20, 27. (b) Matth. 22. 21. (c) 1 Cor. 9. 13, 14. Gal. 6. 6. (d) 2 Cor. 8. init. (e) Eccl. 11. 2.

100 *The Saints Victory,*

liberal Heart, as Occasion presents and his Abilities will allow him.

If God, in His sovereign and holy Providence, sees meet to thin his Glory and strip him of any of his worldly Enjoyments, how submissive and resigned is he, without murmuring and repining? He takes *joyfully the spoiling of his goods* (a), knowing that he hath a Treasure in Heaven; and will not think much to part with any of his lent Estate, in what Way soever God shall see good to call for it. He humbly resigns up the dear Objects of his most tender Affection, and sustains the Wounds, which the Removal of an obliging Consort, a pleasant Child, or an engaging Friend, may give him, with an heroick Patience, a tru y Christian Fortitude of Mind, and says with holy *Job* (*Job* i. 21.) *The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Thus does the Christian, by regulating his Desires after temporal Objects, a moderate Pursuit after them, a due Improvement and an humble Resignation of them, resist and overcome all the Assaults made upon him from worldly Riches.

2. The Christian resists and overcomes the Attempts of worldly *Honours* to fetter and enslave him. How splendid and beautiful an Idol is this, which so great a Part of Mankind readily fall prostrate before? This courts the natural Vanity of our Tempers, and makes suit to the Ambition of our aspiring Minds, with peculiar Advantage. We may see how much we are in Danger of having our Affections charmed with the bright Glare, and our whole Soul fall an easy Prey to the strong Enchantment, only by considering the Force of this Temptation upon our innocent Parents, in the Day they were told, *they should be as Gods*; and how powerful an Adversary then is this like to prove to all their unhappy Descendants, who are certainly now so much the weaker,
by

(a) *Heb.* 10. 34.

by how much they have departed from their original Innocency?

Here therefore the true Christian bestirs himself, and strongly guards against the mistaken Notions of Honour; that he mayn't be led away with the false Appearances of things, and thro' the Power of pernicious Principles and prevailing Custom, under the Pretence of a Point of Honour, be drawn to do those Things, which are so contrary to the divine Law, and destructive to humane Society, as would render him "a Disgrace to a Gibbet." He fetches his Estimate of true Honour from Principles of Religion and Humanity, and counts himself raised to the Top of his Ambition, in being a sincere Servant of God; maintaining an humble Reverence of the divine Majesty upon his Heart, governing his Actions by the strictest Rules of Justice, and in being ever ready to do kind Offices to all that are about him. He sees the Way to true Honour lies thro' the Temple of Virtue, and that *they that honour the Lord, he will honour* (a); and therefore he maintains such a Regard for his Maker, and Value for humane Nature, as that he both fears and scorns to do an ill Action. He is far from looking upon a fashionable Debauchee as a Man of Honour, or imagining that the Vices of the Court and the Grandees of the Earth, are the only Way to emblazen his Name, raise his Reputation, and gain him the Marks of Distinction; or esteeming it a Point of Honour to affront his Company, and contemn his Maker with a foul Mouth and a profane Tongue. *His eyes contemn the vile person* (b), tho' he appear with a long Roll of dignified Ancestors in the most splendid Garb, and in the highest Elevation; and he looks upon profane Swearing, beastly Drunkenness, filthy Uncleaness, and such like Vices, as the Taint of the Blood, and Blots in the Escutcheon of the greatest Men on Earth; and therefore walks in a superior Tract, the Way that is
above

(a) 1 Sam. 2. 30.

(b) Ps. 15. 4.

above to the wise, and upholds the highest Veneration for them that fear the Lord, and is himself a Companion with them.

The Christian seeks not greedily after the empty Titles of Honour, and the noisy and uncertain Blasts of popular Applause; he has too nice a Taste of Virtue, and what is becoming a reasonable and religious Creature, to make his Court to the Vanity of Princes, or give in to the wild unbridled Humours of the Populace; that he may receive the Smiles of the one, or the Carresses of the other, and shine above his Neighbours with their borrowed and false Lights. He turns his Back with Disdain upon the flying Meteor, as beneath his Regards; and scorns to raise himself to the exalted Seats of Honour by the Steps of Wickedness. He moves with inward Satisfaction, within the Line assign'd him by divine Providence; and can contentedly bear to see another, tho' his Equal or Inferior, preferred before him; without the vain Imagination, that nothing can be well done which he is not at the Head of. He hath learned the Apostolical Direction (*Rom. xii. 10.*) *in honour to prefer one another*, and with Lowliness of Mind, to esteem others better than himself. Not but that an Interest in the Esteem of Mankind is a peculiar Gift of God, and a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold, as the wise Man observes, *Prov. xxii. 1.* This the good Man seeks to establish, in the constant Practice of all that is virtuous, laudable, and praise-worthy; and if the World is wise enough to value a Man for his Goodness, 'tis well; but if not, he will not demean himself to do any thing contrary to his Principles, and unbecoming him as a Christian to gain its Plaudite.

And if God place him in a higher Order and Station than his Neighbours, he does not look upon himself as privileged by his Post to give the Loose to his Lusts and Passions, and trespass upon the Laws of God, and Rights
of

of Mankind *; he abhors the Thought of looking down with Contempt upon those that move below him, and treating them with Oppression, Haughtiness, and Insult; but instead thereof, he considers himself as so much the more obliged, in his exalted Orb, to a steady and regular Motion, to scatter his benign Influences, with the greater Constancy, Freedom, and Extensiveness to all around him, and industriously improves his Name and Post, and the Interests these may give him in the Affections of Mankind, so as to render him a more common and publick Benefactor.

3. The Christian resists and overcomes the Assaults made upon him by *worldly Pleasures*. The Objects that awaken our joyous Sensations, and give us Delight and Pleasure, how hard is it to resist and withstand the Force and Power of them? How easily is Mankind prevailed upon to break thro' the Boundaries set them by the divine and humane Laws, and to trample Modesty and Decency under their Feet, that they may take their fill of Pleasure? running into all Excess of Rioting and Drunkenness, Chambering and Wantonness, making their *God their belly, and their glory their shame*, as the Apostle phrases it. *Phil. iii. 19.* There are some Pleasures which are highly agreeable to our rational Natures, such as the Enlargement of the Mind in the Knowledge of the Mysteries of Nature and Art, and the endearing Conversation with our Friends; there are other Pleasures that are adapted to our Senses, and arise from a suitable Contact upon one or other of them, as the natural Actions of Eating and Drinking, the Harmony of Sounds, and the

* Heraldry is no Protection to Immorality. Persons of Condition have no unlimited Range, no Exemption from Duty, no peculiar Licence for Folly and Distraction: so far from this, that Dissolution of Manners is more criminal in such Persons, than in Peasants: Because they are more indebted to God, and the Government for their Distinction; and because they miscarry under a better Education, and are more infectious in the Example. *Collier's Essays*, Part III. p. 111.

the like ; and there are other that we need, for the unbending the Mind from its severer Reflections, and the relaxing the Nerves from their vigorous Stretch in the toilsome Labours the Body has been engaged in. And because some or other of these have a grateful Operation not only upon our Senses, but upon our rational Mind, therefore there is very great Hazard, lest we lose our Virtue in the close Pursuit after them ; so that Pleasure is like to prove a very powerful and dangerous Enemy.

But the true Christian has a more rectified Gust, than to relish only the Pleasures of Sense and Reason ; and he tastes so much of the sublimer spiritual Pleasures that are to be found in the Ways of Wisdom, and the divine Joys that result from a Life of Religion, that he can, in some Measure, condemn the lower Satisfactions of the animal and rational Life. He considers the Pleasures of Sense and Reason as suited only to the present Life and World ; and consequently are to continue but for a Season ; while the spiritual Delights, arising from Faith and Holiness, carry him into the Rivers of Pleasures, which are at God's right Hand for ever and ever : and therefore he dreads the Thought of forfeiting the substantial and lasting Joys above, for the sake of any, or all, the short-lived ones on Earth. He looks upon it as criminal to give himself up to a Life of Pleasure, because this would be *to be dead while he liveth* ; 'twould be to put himself under the Government of a perpetual Craving, and over-run his Reason in the eager Chace ; which is beneath the Character of a Man, and much more of a Christian.

He lays just Restraints upon all his rational Pleasures ; and those that are purely sensual he keeps himself at the utmost Distance from. He is not so unaccountably vain and stupid as to expect any true Satisfaction in those Ways which will unavoidably lead him down to endless Torments ; but counts those Gratifications too dear bought that are at the Expence of his Duty to God or
Man.

Man, and will issue in an eternal State of uneasy Reflections; and therefore says of all forbidden Pleasure, as *Joseph*, who was strongly enticed to one of the greatest of them (*Gen. xxxix. 9.*) *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* It is no Sport to him to do Mischief, nor will he purchase his own Ease at the Price of his Neighbour's Unhappiness; but it is Joy to his Countenance, and Health to his Bones, to see one of his Fellow-Creatures recovered a little from the Infelicity he had fallen into, and smile with the Help and Assistance he has afforded him.

As for all the lawful Pleasures which Reason and Religion allow him, he looks upon them as the Bounty of his Indulgent Father, and is thankful for them; *he eats his bread with joy, and drinks his wine with a merry heart, and lives joyfully with the companion whom he loveth, as the portion appointed him of God (a)*; but then he is peculiarly careful not to surfeit himself upon them, till he forgets his God, and is lost in the Dregs of Sensuality. He ever bears in Mind the Caution of our blessed Saviour to His Disciples, *Luke xxi. 34. Take heed to your selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life*; and endeavours to reduce all his Pleasures to Rule; to use them in such Measure as may best prepare him with the greater Vigour of Mind, and Strength of Body, to perform the several Duties of Religion and Humanity, which are required of him; and so keeps them in a Subserviency to the great End of his Life; according to the Apostle's Advice, *1 Cor. x. 31. Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Thus we have seen the Christian contending with the Riches, the Honours, and the Pleasures of this World, and gaining a Victory over them. I will add,

4. The

(a) *Ecc. 9. 7, 8.*

4. The Christian resists and overcomes the Assaults made upon him by the *afflictive Evils* which he meets with in this World. The things that appear contrary to our outward Interest, and give us Pain and Uneasiness, are apt to work very forcibly upon our Fears, stir up our Aversion, and put us upon an eager Flight from them; and our great Danger from this Quarter lies here, lest our Passions should grow too keen and violent, hurry us into Impatience and Discontent, and provoke us to reflect Dishonour upon God, by our Fretfulness and Murmuring at His governing Providence; or precipitate us to do that which is injurious to our Fellow-creatures, in the Use of indirect and unwarrantable Methods to prevent the Evil which we fear, or deliver us from the Burden which lies heavy upon us. Here lay *Job's* Danger; and this was what the grand Adversary aimed at, and hoped for, as the Result of all his grievous Afflictions; that he would be provoked in the Heat of his Passions, to speak reproachfully of God in His Conduct towards him; and this, she that should have calmed his Mind, allviated his Grievs, and strengthened his Soul, as a vile Agent of the wicked one strongly tempts him to; *Job* ii. 9. *doest thou still retain thy integrity?* (says she) *curse God and die.*

But as *Job* overcame this fierce Assau't upon his Virtue, so does every true Christian; tho' at the same Time he makes abundant Discovery of his Weakness. Under all the various Evils of Affliction, he is careful to maintain an humble and awful Sense of the divine Majesty, Sovereignty, and Dominion; and a high and venerable Esteem of the Rectitude, Wisdom, and Goodness of God in all His Administrations. He remembers that the Great God has a more absolute Right of Dominion over him (because He gave Being to him, and upholds him therein) than he; as a Potter can have over the Clay, which he mouldeth at his Pleasure; or as an Owner can have over the dumb Creature, which he feeds, and labours,

labours, and destroys too, as seemeth him good. And whatever be the Means and Instruments of bringing any Affliction upon him, he bears it in Mind, that they act herein but as the Servants of God, fulfilling His Counsell, and still it is the Lord who hath done it. Yea, whatever Evil befalls him, he considers it, not only as the Result of the Will of the great Lord of all, in whose Hands his Breath is, and whose are all his Ways, and who has a Right to do what He will with His own; but as coming from Him whom he hath chosen for his God, and his Friend, and to whom he hath committed himself, and the Conduct of all his Affairs; who therefore cannot possibly do him any real Hurt, but always aims at his best Good by all that He orders for him. These Considerations *shut his mouth*, and make him *dumb and silent before him* (a). This calms down his Passions and makes him patient, composes his Mind and fills him with Resignation; and enables him to say in some Measure, as the great Captain of our Salvation, *John xviii. 11. The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* In the midst of all his Conflicts, he endeavours so to behave and acquit himself, as that he may not despise the Chastenings of the Lord, nor faint when he is rebuked of Him; he bears the Rod like a submissive Child, who knows his Father's Love, and is conscious of his own Infirmary; and he improves the Correction, so as that his outward Sorrows may increase his spiritual Joys; that he may glorify God in the Fire; and when he comes out of it, may be a Vessel more prepared for his Master's Use and Service.

Hence, is he *poor*, and but a Brother of low Degree as to the Things of this World? He acknowledges that the Least of what he enjoys is More than he deserves, and endeavours with the Apostle Paul, *whatsoever state he is in, therewith to be content*. Phil. iv. 11. He eyes the blessed Jesus as emptying himself of his Abundance,

and

(a) *Psal. 39. 9.*

and for his sake becoming poor, and is not uneasy at being conformed to Him, who had not where to lay His Head. He improves the Little he has, as well as he can, in his Master's Service ; and he takes none but justifiable Methods to better his Circumstances in the World. He rejoices in the immense Riches, the vast Spoils, Faith gives him the View and Assurance of ; and envieth not the Prosperity of the wealthy and the great, nor grieves at the unequal Distributions of divine Providence, that he is not as plentifully provided for as others.

Or is he *disgraced*, reviled, reproached and slandered ? Truly there is scarce any Thing more repugnant to us, who are naturally ambitious of being well thought of ; and therefore as this touches the Man in the most tender Part, and commits a Rape upon what is most dear to him, it seems to call for all his Resentment, and stir up his whole Revenge. Yet the Christian endeavours to approve himself a Follower of the meek Jesus, under all such cruel Mockings, vile Indignities, and inhuman Abuses as are heaped upon him : He remembers, with *David*, who it is that bids a *Shimei* curse ; and therefore suppresses his Resentment, lays aside all Thought of a Retaliation, and renders not Railing for Railing, Slander for Slander ; but as he has been taught by his blessed Master (*Matth. v. 44.*) *He blesses them that curse him, does good to them that hate him, and prays for them that despitefully use him, and persecute him.* He leaves it to God, to whom Vengeance belongs, to vindicate his Name, and right his Cause ; and he retires within himself, to feast upon the exquisite Delights of a pure Conscience, testifying for him, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity he has his Conversation in the World ; and takes the Hint (tho' the Devil mean not so) to search his Heart and try his Ways, and correct what he finds amiss in his Conduct.

In a word, under the *Sickness and Pains* of the Body, and the Death of his valuable Friends and Relations,
tho'

who' Nature may be forced to groan and roar out, from the heavy Pressure of the Burden, he shaves his Head and rends his Mantle in Token of his Grief and Anguish being heavy upon him ; yet he considers with himself who has stripped him of his Ease, and taken away his earthly Comforts from him, and therefore forgets not to fall down and worship his God ; submitting himself patiently to the Methods which infinite Wisdom, in Conjunction with boundless Love, orders for him, to make him more meet for the heavenly Inheritance, [So a glorious Conqueror *, well known among us, who languished and died under the most tormenting Pain, that perhaps a Man can be capable of in the Body, openly triumphed over this great Enemy to Nature. After a vehement Fit of his Pain was gone off, so as to give him some Respite from the most violent Roaring, O Sir (said he to me, with something of Pleasancy in his Countenance) *I now feel so much Pain, that I could not wish my worst Enemy, no not the Man that I should see murdering my Wife and Children before my Face, to be in my Condition ; and yet this is perfect Ease to what I felt but just now, and what I expect to feel ; but Lord* (said he, with a devout Aspect, and a truly Christian Fortitude of Mind) *if this be the Way to prepare me for Heaven, and fit me for thy Service, strike, Lord, strike me as much as Thou pleasest.*] O the Triumphs of a holy Soul ! Thus does the Christian humble himself under the mighty Hand of God, and patiently bear the Indignation of the Lord ; and it is no small Addition to his Comfort and the Support of his Mind, that he has not been accessary to his own Unhappiness, and vitiated his Constitution, weakened his Frame, and corrupted the Juices of his Blood, by an unwarrantable Prodigality of his Person ; in any Courses of Intemperance, violent Passions,

sions, and the like, which often fill the Body with many mortifying Accidents and painful Companions.

Thus the true Christian resists, and finally overcomes the World, the Men, and the Things of it.

3. The true Christian maintains a War with, and overcomes *the Devil*. This is the grand Arch-enemy, who, bloated with Malice and Envy, a Hatred of God, and Rage at the Prospect of Man's Happiness, in his Interest in the Favour of God while in Innocency, and Hopes of Recovery thereto since his Fall, incessantly uses all possible Artifice, Stratagem, and Force to deprive us of our Felicity, and make us as miserable as he is himself, under the Weight of divine Wrath. Hence says the Apostle, *1 Pet. v. 8. Your adversary the devil, as a roaring Lyon, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* Therefore is his Name called *Satan*, as denoting his inveterate Malice and implacable Enmity to Mankind. He it was that, as the great Incendiary, first kindled the Principles of Rebellion in the Breasts of our first Parents, and seduced them into a treacherous Conspiracy against their rightful Sovereign, themselves, and their own Happiness; wisely adapted himself to our rational and sensitive Nature, with the Pretensions of perfect Knowledge, handed to the Mind by an Object of Sense, beautiful to the Eye, and pleasant to the Taste. This is the great Impostor, that ever makes it his Business to put a Trick and Cheat upon the humane Race, in his false Representations of the World and Sin to us, and restlessly improves our inbred Lusts, and the surrounding Objects of Sense, in a perpetual War against us. Subtle, powerful, and numerous is he; *his name is legion, for they are many*, Mark v. 9. He is an intelligent Spirit, and knows how to convey his Temptations, Snares, and Darts to our Spirits; he is well acquainted with all our Weaknesses, what are the best Weapons to foil us with, and by what Stratagems he shall be most likely to prevail over us; and he will not fail to suit himself

himself accordingly, to adapt himself, his Designs and Attempts to our Temper and Constitution, to our Age and Sex, to our Business and Employment, to our Recreations and Diversions, to our Relations and Conditions of Life, yea, to our holy and religious Duties; that if possible, in the one or the other, by this or that means, he may get the better of us, and subdue us to his Will.

The natural Man indeed falls an easy Prey to this common Adversary, and is *in the snare of the devil, being taken captive by him at his will*; as we are told 2 Tim. ii. 26. But the true Christian, tho' with Fear and Trembling, yet, with an undaunted Spirit, an unshaken Resolution, and a holy Fervour of Soul, stands the Encounter, resists the evil one, stifles his Suggestions, and wards off the Blow that was aimed at him. He can't bear the Thought of coming under the Government of so vile a Tyrant, and subjecting his nobler Powers to his mean Drudgery; he remembers his plighted Faith to his supreme Lord, and knows well the vast Difference there is between the Work and Wages of his royal Master, and that of the base Pretender; and therefore flights the Miscreant's Offer, and heartily disdains to comply with any of his Proposals. To this End he is *sober and vigilant* (as the Apostle directs 1 Pet. v. 8,) that he may not be taken by Surprise and at unawares; he puts himself under the Conduct of his Almighty Leader, that he may rest safe, as under the Shadow of His Wing; and he cloaths himself with the *whole Armour of God*, and summons up all his Fortitude and Skill, that he may be able to stand in the Day of Trial, and ward off the fiery Darts of the evil one. Thus (as Eph. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.) *he girds up his loins with truth*, receiving the Truth in the Love thereof with Uprightness and Integrity, and not in Form and Appearance only, that his Heart being sound, and his Conscience pure, he may be strong for the Encounter; he *puts on the breast-plate*

III2 *The Saints Victory,*

plate of righteousness, in a careful Attendance upon all the Duties which he owes to God and Man*, that no Act of Unrighteousness in withholding from his Maker or Fellow-Creature their several Dues, may give a Wound to the very Vitals of the Christian Religion which he makes a Profession of; his *Feet are shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace*, with an hearty Delight in the Divine Law, and a chearful Readiness to run the Way of God's Commandments, that he may not break the Peace of his own Mind, nor give Occasion of Offence and Stumbling unto others, by giving up or departing from any of the Truths and Ways of the Christian Religion †; *Above all he takes to himself the shield of faith*, firmly believing all the Articles of the Christian Religion, and living a Life of Faith on the Son of God, that by his Faith in God and Christ he may be cover'd as with a Shield, and so be able to rescind the Force, and extinguish the Heat of the venomous Suggestions of the Devil; *He takes the Helmet of Salvation*, that is, the *Hope of Salvation*; as the Apostle phrases it, 1 *Theff.* v. 8. The glorious Hope of Glory, Honour, Immortality, and eternal Life, made to him in the precious Promises of the Gospel by Jesus Christ, that having his Head, his principal governing Views || defended hereby, he may not be stagger'd with anxious Fears, nor wholly stunned with Distrust and mortal Dispair; he

* *Integritate igitur primum, deinde pia & sancta vita ornari debent Christiani Milites.* Calv.

† *Preparatio autem hac est alacris Promptitudo et prompta Alacritas animi, partim ad ambulandam viam Evangelii pacis, partim ad eam annuntiandam. Plebs enim Christiana hac Promptitudine calceata esse debet, ut per viam Evangelii inoffenso pede ambulet, suaq; sancta vita et conversatione alios ad eandem viam ineundam alliciat, itaque Fidem et Evangelium propaget et promoveat.*

|| *Nam sicut caput regit, dirigit, movet et gubernat cetera membra totumque hominem; ita Finis et Intentio dirigit, movet et gubernat omnia hominis desideria, verba, et opera.*

he takes the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, that having this ever ready at hand with him, he may be able, like his Leader to draw forth, as it is written (a), thus saith the Lord, thus hath He commanded, thus hath He promised, and thus hath he threatened to keep the Adversary at a Distance from him, and fell the strongest Temptations to Errors in Doctrine and Manners; and to all he adds his constant Prayers and Supplications in the Spirit, with Sincerity and Importunity making it his daily Request to God, that he may not be lead into Temptation, nor left to himself under them, but that the Grace of Christ may be sufficient for him to strengthen him to the Battle, and grant him the Victory. Thus does the Christian arm himself from Head to Foot, and endeavours skillfully to defend himself, and manfully stand his Ground against the Principalities and Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses that make their fierce Assault upon him; and by a due Improvement of the whole Armour of God, he is really too many for the infernal Legions, and comes off a glorious Conqueror.

And indeed, when he hath once learned to subdue self and crucify the World, it will not be so hard and difficult for him to combat the fallen Spirits, subtle, fierce, and numerous as they are; because the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, are the chief Auxiliaries which the Devil hath engaged in his Service; by whom he carries on the Prosecution of the ghostly War upon us, and with which he most fatally wounds us, and without which he would not be able so easily to come at us. For we are drawn aside and enticed thro' the Working of our own Hearts Lust (b), and by the more immediate Impression of external Objects upon our Senses, which the Devil improves as the best Media to subdue our Virtue, and lead us captive: so that if self and the World are truly kept under, his Batteries are demolished, and his Mines destroyed, and the Christian remains impregnable.

(a) C. a Lap. in Loc. (b) James. 1. 14.

pregnably immured within his own Innocency. The spiritual Lusts which he enforces from his own Example, are overcome by the Mortification of self, and the carnal ones which he tempts us to, are repelled by being weaned from the World; and therefore the Christian, that cleanses himself from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and perfects Holiness in the Fear of God, must needs be victorious over this grand Adversary.

However, since Satan has this Advantage over the Christian, from the Reminders of Corruption in him, and the strong Impressions of a World he necessarily converses with, while in his State of Tryal; he had therefore so much the more need to be upon his Watch and Guard; and the true Christian, ordinarily is so, that he may have an Eye upon his weakest Part, and see where he lies most open to Danger; that he may acquaint himself with the Wiles of the Devil, and be able to discern him in the various Methods of his Approach, and the different Forms he appears in; that he may timely spy out even his Preparations for an open Assault, and the very Beginnings of his secret Opening of a Mine; and that he may suitably apply his Christian Fortitude and Prudence to frustrate the Design, and beat off the Tempter from him. Hence is the Advice of our Saviour to his Disciples, *Matth. xxvi. 41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation.* Hence is that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. xvi. 13. Watch ye, stand fast in the Faith, quit you like Men, be strong.*

Thus does the true Christian overcome the Flesh, the World, and the Devil. And I may add,

4. The Christian overcomes the last Enemy *Death*. *The last Enemy, Death, shall be destroyed,* says the Apostle; *1 Cor. xv. 26.* This is an Enemy, both to the Man, and to the Christian. 'Tis a common Enemy to the humane Nature, as it dissolves the Union between the Soul and Body: and 'tis the Christian's Enemy, as considered in it self, it is the Fruit of the Curse, and the Punishment of Sin, and in the Terrors of its countenance, and the hideous Forms it appears in, challenging his Faith and Hope in the unseen eternal Things which lye beyond Death

Death and the Grave. 'Tis the last Enemy, as it last takes Place, after that the Devil and Sin have proved too hard for the Intelligent Agent ; and it is last overcome in the glorious Resurrection to immortal Life.

This Enemy the true Christian does, and shall overcome. Not that he is so invulnerable, as never to feel any Impressions from it, or that his Christianity shall preserve him from Dying. But he conquers this Enemy in a present fearless Intrepidity of Mind, from the Consideration of the Victory of the Redeemer, who hath gone down as to *Gaza*, and torn up the Posts, and born away the Gate and Bars of Death, and made a shew of them openly ; thereby delivering His Followers from the Bondage which they were subject to, thro' the Fear of Death. Or, at least, he keeps alive his Faith and Hope, that it shall be unto him as God hath promised ; and this his Faith, and Hope, in a due Exercise disarms Death of its ghastly Terrors, turns its Point from him, and enables him, with Placidity and Composure of Mind, to say, in a holy Triumph of Soul, as, 1 Cor. xv. 56. *O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* For as the Habits of divine Grace in his Soul, give him a Security against his being hurt by his continuing under the Power of Death for a Time, because the Curse of the Law is fully answered by the Blessed Jesus, who has died for him ; so while his Graces are in their regular Exercise, he is prepared to meet it, whatsoever Form it shall appear in : and when the Providence of God shall call him to it, he can cheerfully take up his Life in his Hand, and confront this Enemy, by exposing it to the last Hazards, in the Cause of God, and for the Defence of his People, jeopardizing his Life in the high Places of the Field, and not loving his Life unto the Death. When it comes to his Turn to fall by this common Enemy, he can look him in the Face with a triumphant Smile, readily obey the high Command, and resign the Disposal of his yet animated Dust to the Will of Heaven, and rejoice that he is about to put off his vile Garments, in order to his being cloathed with Robes of everlasting Splendor. He has the joyous Hope, that

his Death will put a final End to all Conflict and Struggle with any of the Enemies of his Character and Privilege; that it will be but a Dismission of him, from the militant, to the Inchoation of the triumphant State above: till the Consummation of all things come on, when his Conquest will be more compleat and evident, in his Bodies breaking the Chords of Death, and rising from its long Sleep after a toilsome Campaign, to receive with its Union to the Soul, the distinguishing Marks of Honour from his gracious Lord, in a vastly more than a *Roman Triumph*. Thus the holy Soul feasts it-self upon the Rivers of Pleasures, and Fulness of Joys it has in View, and fears not to walk through the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death: and thus dying “ with peaceful Joy, “ those that converse with him, are drawn by that Fra- “ grance of Paradise to apply themselves to serious Religion (a); and earnestly cry out, *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

And this compleat Victory the Christian shall obtain, when the Time of Battle and War shall be intirely at an End. Then *what is sown in Corruption, shall be raised in Incorruption; what is sown in Dishonour, shall be raised in Glory; what is sown in Weakness, shall be raised in Power; what is sown a natural Body, shall be raised a spiritual Body;* then shall *this Corruption put on Incorruption, and this mortal shall put on Immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory:* as the Apostle elegantly discourses, 1 Cor. xv. 41. The scattered Dust of the dead Body, wheresoever lodged, whether in the Entrails of animated Creatures, or buried under the Clods of the Valley or the Waves of the Sea, or consumed in a funeral Pile prepared for it by the harsh Devotion of a Friend, or the cruel Rage of an Enemy, or whatsoever Forms it may have passed thro’, since the Soul took its Leave of it, shall be all collected together, at least so much as is sufficient to constitute the same Body, be raised from the Power of Death over it, and be reunited

(a) Dr. Bates Fol. p. 446.

ted to the soul, tho' wonderfully spiritualized, never more to undergo a Separation from it, but to remain animated by the immortal intellectual Spirit, without the necessary Aids which our present frail State calls for, thro'out eternal Ages.

And *Why should it seem an impossible Thing unto you, that God should raise the Dead?* Is He not a God of infinite Power, and can any Thing be too hard for the Almighty? Suppose it to exceed all the Conceptions and Ideas we are capable of forming, how this can be; yet, can a finite Mind comprehend that which is absolutely infinite? Are we not plunged into insuperable Difficulties, and wholly lost in our Thoughts, when we speak of relative Infinites, or what is improperly called Infinite, respecting Matter and some of its Properties? And shall we imagine that we can have fuller and clearer Notions of that which is absolutely Infinite? Does it require a greater Stretch of Power to raise the Dead, than to give Life to the Creature at the first? Is it not as easy for infinite Wisdom to find out every individual Dust of the dead Body, however separated one from another, as to find out thro' the wide Chaos, what Particles of Matter were necessary to the forming such a Body at the first? Yea, is it possible for any one single Dust to lye hid in so obscure a Corner, as to be out of the Sight of that God whose Understanding is infinite? Why then shouldest thou err, not considering the Power of God, and the sacred Scriptures, which assure us of the Resurrection of the Body? Thus our Saviour hath told us, *John. v. 28, 29. All that are in their Graves shall hear His Voice; and shall come forth -- unto the Resurrection.* The Christian therefore has Hope, that there shall be a Resurrection; in the Faith of this he lives and dies; and that as to himself particularly it will be a Resurrection unto Life, after which there shall be no more Death; for as our Lord told the sceptical Sadducees concerning these happy Children of the Resurrection, *Luke. xx. 36. neither can they dye any more.* It was a Reflection upon the glorious Resurrection State, which threw the Apostle into that holy Transport

Transport of Soul, which we find him in, in 2 Cor. v. 1, 4. *For we know, (says he) that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens. --- For we that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burthened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life.*

Thus we have seen who and what are the Christian's Enemies, and wherein his Victory over them does consist; or when he may be said to overcome carnal corrupt Self, a false and tempting World, a subtle and busy Adversary the Devil, and the last Enemy Death.

I pass to the third Thing I proposed, viz.

III. To shew whence it is that the Christian is enabled to overcome, and obtain the Victory.

Now certainly the greatest Care and Vigilance, the strongest Resolutions, and the most powerful and unwearied Endeavours are necessary to gain a Victory over such a mighty Army of spiritual Enemies as the Christian is called to encounter with all. And without a suitable Hardiness of Spirit, Firmness of Mind, painful Labour, and unfainting Diligence, it cannot be reasonably expected, that he should be able to beat down his Foes, and take the Kingdom of Heaven. For our Saviour tells us, *Matth. xi. 12. From the Days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the violent take it by Force:* which sufficiently points it out as our Duty, to be active and laborious, resolute and indefatigable, to endure Hardship as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, courageously to fight His Battles, and play the Men for our selves, for our own Souls, and the Habitation of our God; as well knowing, that Pusillanimity and Cowardice, Sloth and Idleness will never subdue such a potent Adversary, and win the incorruptible Crown.

But after all; none will vainly suppose that it is owing to any meer Conduct, Virtue, and Strength of their own, that they are enabled to overcome. For who is there, that is of sufficient Skill to counterwork all the deep laid Designs of the Prince of Darkness; or who is so mighty in Strength

Strength, as to prevail over Principalities and Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high Places? especially when we consider that the natural Bent of his Inclination, is already engaged on the Enemies side, and all his Powers in a sworn Confederacy with them. Certainly then, if ever the Victory turn to his Advantage, it must be by a Power superior to his own, that leads him on and strengthens him in the Combate. So that the Conquest is owing,

1. To the Agency of the *Omnipotent Spirit*: who 'tis renews and quickens the Soul, and sheds abroad in it the first Principles of the divine Life, cherishes that Life in it, leads the Soul on in its Conflict with its ghostly Enemies, and strengthens it to the Victory; for thus the Soul under the Operations of the holy Spirit of God, being raised unto Newness of Life, is made spiritually-minded, and regains its primitive Empire and Dominion over the Senses, which was wrested out of its Hands, by the Subtilty of its Adversaries; and so is no longer forced to couch under the Usurpation of the Flesh, to govern it self in a Walk according to the Course of this World, and submit it self to the Influence of the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that worketh in the Children of Disobedience. The divine Spirit in a Way suitable to the rational Faculties and Capacities of the Man, yet irresistibly, (as the Wind (a) whose Operations we feel, but remain Strangers to the Origin and Source of,) infuses the Seeds of the divine Life into the Soul, and inspires it with Courage and Strength, and makes it strong in the Lord, and the Power of his Might; and so enables him to combat with Success, an Army of Lusts, a Legion of Devils, and whatever stands in the Way of his Privilege and Glory.

This divine Spirit is in the Soul of the Christian, a Spirit of Illumination, whereby He enlightens the Eyes of his Mind, and gives him a Spirit of discerning, that he may know the Things which are freely given him of God, and be well apprised of, and suitably affected with the transcendent Excellency of that Humility, Charity,
and

(a) *Job.* 3. 8.

and Purity, wherein the divine Life so eminently consisteth, and be fired with a Zeal for the Attainment of it; and shews to him the intriguing Designs of his spiritual Enemies, that apprehensive of the Danger he is in from them, of being diverted or hindred in the Pursuit of so noble an End, he may be able to counterwork them, and frustrate their base Intentions; and He sets before him the fair Prospect of the everlasting Gate as engaged for him, and the glorious Hope of the Crown that awaits him, and so greatly encourages him to the Conflict. Thus the Eyes of his Understanding being enlightened, to know the Hope of his Calling, and the exceeding Greatness of His Power towards them that believe, He worketh mightily in him, striving against Sin, resisting unto Blood, and ceaseth not, till every high Thought and towering Imagination is brought into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ.

This divine Spirit is in the Christian a Spirit of Vigilance and Activity, that keeps him upon his Guard, rouses him from his Sloth, and watches over him to defend him from Surprise, and makes him quick to spy out his Danger, and active to avoid it. He assists and strengthens the Soul in mortifying the Deeds of the Body (*a*), Fornication, Uncleaness, inordinate Affection, evil Concupiscence, and Covetousness, that being thus purged from the Feculency of the natural Man, he may have near Access to God here, in the Duties of Holiness, and be made meet to live with God, and rejoyce in His more immediate Presence for ever hereafter. For as Dr. *More* (*b*) well observes, "it is Uncleaness of Spirit, and not Distance of Place, that dissevers us from the Deity. In short the divine Spirit sheds abroad his Influences in us, upholds our weak Hands, strengthens our feeble Knees, draws forth our Graces into Exercise, invests us with the Armour of Righteousness, teaches our Hands to war, and our Fingers to fight, and helps us to wield the Spear the Sword and the Habergeon.

While

(*a*) *Rom. 8. 13.*

(*b*) *Preface to the Myst. of Godl.*

While therefore the Christian is thus assisted by the divine Spirit, inspiring him with nobler Views, invincible Resolution, and a masterly Fortitude of Soul, how can it be otherwise but that he must at last overcome his Enemies? since as the Apostle *John* tells us, 1 *Joh.* iv. 4. *Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.* For now the God of the Christian is on his side, even the everliving Jehovah; and what little Reason then has he to fear what his Enemies can do unto him? what Powers in Earth or Hell are able to stand before the victorious Arm of God? Tho' the Christian be in himself, never so weak and feeble, and have no might and Power of his own, against so great a Company, yet so long as the Lord of Hosts hath espoused his Cause, he may be sure of a complete Victory over all his Enemies; and may say with the devout *Psalmist*, *Psal.* lvi. 9. *When I cry unto Thee, then shall mine enemies turn back; this I know, for God is for me.* If God be for us, who can be against us; the almighty Power of the Spirit of God is able easily to suppress indwelling Lusts, and overcome surrounding Temptations; either from the World, or the infernal Shades; and assisted by this almighty Power, he, who is but weak in himself, can vanquish and put to flight the most potent and numerous of his Adversaries. As *Moses* sang upon the signal Victory over *Pharaoh*, and his mighty Hosts, *Exod.* xv. 6. *Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power, Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy; and in the greatness of thy excellency, Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee:* So may the true Christian sing the Song of Triumph; because the divine Spirit at the right Hand of the Lord, glorious in Power, does enable him to put to flight the Armies of the Aliens, to mortifie the Deeds of the Body, with its Affections and Lusts, to tread upon the Lion and the Adder, and trample the young Lion and the Dragon under his Feet; *By the which Spirit also dwelling in him, shall his mortal body be quickened (a), and raised to endless Life:*

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2. It

(a) *Rom.* 8. 11.

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2. It is owing to *his Union to and Fellowship with Jesus Christ his exalted Head*, that the true Christian is enabled to overcome his Enemies. Jesus Christ was Himself completely victorious over all the Enemies of our Salvation, in the various Conflicts He had with them, while he tabernacled with Men on Earth; and none of them all were ever able to gain the least Advantage upon Him, or give Him the least Wound in the Soul. For as His Humanity was immaculate and undefiled in it's Conception and Birth, and had no deceitful Principle in it, whereby it could be warped and turned aside from the most consummate Purity and Love; so by the Energy of the divine *Logos*, or the Son of God incarnate in him, He preserved the Innocency and Integrity of His Nature, in spite of all the Attempts of Men and Devils to rob Him thereof; and so his whole Life on Earth, from the Beginning to the End of it, was perfectly (a) *holy, harmless, undefiled, and sepearte from sinners*; upon the Account whereof his Victory over our spiritual Enemies was complete in the whole, and in every Part of his Warfare. And tho' the Enemy so far prevailed as to bring about the Accomplishment of the mysterious, and most merciful Design (to them wholly unknown) of His submitting to the Penalty of the Law, and undergoing the Curse, by tasting Death for all His Followers; yet this was but a Wound in the Heel, or as a Rent in the Skirt of His Garment, which tho' painful to Him, proved eventually fatal to the Adversary, and the utter abolishing of their Power, the entire breaking of their Forces, and the putting of them to a perpetual Rout; and the Victory in this Regard was perfected in His triumphant Resurrection from the Dead.

Now every true Christian has a near and intimate Union to Jesus Christ, as his Head. Hence Christ is said to *dwell in their hearts by faith*, and they to be *rooted and grounded in His love*. (Eph. iv. 17.) He dwells in them, not only

(a) *Heb. 7. 26.*

only by His Spirit, which is the Spirit of God, taking up his Residence in their Souls, but by a mysterious and indissoluble Union between Him, as the Head, and them, as Members of his Body; see, *1 Cor. xii. 12, 27.* From this Incorporation of Christ and Believers, they are become One in Affection, Inclination, and Interest; and hence the true Christian has a blessed Fellowship with Jesus Christ, in His Victories and Triumphs, as well as in His Sufferings and Death: And thus by the Love of Christ manifested in taking them into a Union to Himself, and dying for them, they are made victorious. Inasmuch as He, their Head, overcame all His and their Enemies, by his perfect Obedience and expiatory Sufferings, and by His Resurrection and Enthronement has made a Shew of them openly, triumphing over them; therefore every true Christian, by Virtue of his Union to, and Fellowship with Christ Jesus, is a sharer in that Victory of his Lord, and as a Follower of Jesus is lead on to an assured Conquest. For as it fares with the Head, so does it also with the Members; and as in and with Him they have suffered, so do they also conquer. Hence Christ said to His Disciples, *Joh. xvi. 33. In the world, ye shall have Tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* Hence also we are told, *1 Joh. v. 4. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* How does our Faith overcome the World? but as it interests the Soul in Jesus Christ, as its Head, and so gives it a Right to his Victory and Conquest, by it's Fellowship with Him; and by deriving Strength from Him, as the Head of Influences, whereby it is enabled to stand fast in the Day of Tryal, to contend with spiritual Wickednesses, and in the End to overcome those Principalities and Powers. Hence said the Apostle, *Rom. xvi. 20. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your Feet;* and the same Apostle makes that holy Boast, *Phil. iv. 13. I can do all things thro' Christ which strengtheneth me.* Without Him indeed we can do nothing: seperated from Him, the poor Soul falls an easy Prey to his ghostly Adversaries; the weakest Temptations prove too hard for him. So that he that is

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out of Christ, as having no Interest in Him, nor Fellowship with Him, is continually at the Mercy of his cruel Enemies, who put out his Eyes, stab and wound him, and perpetually insult over him, as the *Philistines* over poor blinded *Sampson*. But no sooner does the Soul become united to Jesus Christ, but immediately new Strength and Vigour is communicated to it; and animated by a Word of Command from the great Captain of our Salvation, and fired by his noble Example, the Christian is enabled to go on courageously, to do valiantly, and to beat down his Foes.

And needs must it be that every true Christian thus united to Jesus Christ, shall finally overcome, because the Death of Christ has purchased the Victory for him. For not only has Christ, *by His death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil,* (as *Heb. xi. 14.*) but His Death is meritorious for all His Followers, that they also shall finally overcome the Flesh, the World, and the Devil. For the Ends of His Death had remained unaccomplished, if a victory had not been procured thereby for his Disciples, as well as for Himself, because *he laid down his life for them* (a), in their Stead, for their Benefit and Advantage, and that they might reap the blessed Fruits and Effects of it, in a Deliverance from the Usurpation and Tyranny of spiritual Wickednesses over them. The Life of Christ was a continued Series of Victories over their Enemies, and His Death hath brought an utter Destruction upon their Strength and Power, and at the same Time hath merited of his eternal Father, that all His Followers shall receive sufficient Supplies of divine Grace, to enable them to pursue the Advantage He hath gained, and reap the Fruits of His Conquest, in their own personal Triumph over all their spiritual Enemies. How amazing is it, that bleeding should be the Token of Victory? and Death the way to a Triumph? that falling slain should be the Prelude to the Glories of an immortal

(a) *Job. 10. 15.*

mortal Life? yet such are the Wonders of the Redeemer's Reign! When the Devil procured the Death of Christ, by the Influence of his Counsel at *Jerusalem*, it looked as if he had accomplished his great Design, and by this apparent Victory over the Seed of the Woman, had forever disappointed the joyous Expectation of them that waited for Salvation in Israel, and had now irrecoverably involved the whole Race of Apostate *Adam* in the same Misery and Despair with himself: but lo! what a Battle is given him, in the whole of his Counsel's turning to his own Destruction? The Prince of Life entered into the cold Apartments of the Grave, and passed into *Hades*, the invisible World of Spirits, that by the Bands of Death that were about him, he might effectually bind the strong Man armed, spoil him of his Goods, and deliver the Prey out of the Hands of the mighty, and that he might overcome the Adversary in his own Territories, and by his own Weapons. Thus (a) "Satan is defeated by the
"Counsels he took to secure his Possession, and loses the
"Victory by the same Means whereby he thought
"to preserve it.

Besides, Jesus Christ ever lives to make Intercession for all his Disciples, that while they are in the World, they may be kept from the Evils of it (b); and because He is their Advocate with the Father, therefore His Intercession prevails for the obtaining all needful Supplies of Help and Assistance in their Conflict with their spiritual Enemies, and procures a Conquest for them. Thus *Peter*, tho' he was sorely wounded by the Enemy, yet is made finally victorious over him, by Virtue of the Redeemer's Advocateship; as Christ tells him, *Luke. xxii. 31, 32. Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.* While His holy Hands are lifted up, as they always are, in his Intercession, before the Throne of His Father, the spiritual Israel are rendered successful against those

(a) *Charn.* vol. 1, p. 239.(b) *Job. 17. 15.*

those their Enemies whom God hath devoted to Destruction; and in the Conclusion, obtain a Triumph over all that would hinder their Passage into the heavenly Canaan: For *Him the Father heareth always*, Joh. xi. 42. Thus are true Christians made *Conquerors, and more than conquerors, thro' Him who hath loved them*; as the Apostle tells us, *Rom. viii. 36.* And so I come to the Fourth, and last Head under the Doctrine, *viz.*

IV. To shew that *Jesus Christ will give* unto them, that so overcome, *to sit with Him in His throne, even as He overcame, and is set down with His Father, in His throne.* This is truly a large Field for a delightful Variety of noble Thoughts; but I will only suggest a more general Hint at Things. Here there are two Things necessary to be touched upon, *viz.*

1. To explain the Mystery of Christ's sitting with His Father in His Throne; and the Christian's sitting with Him in His Throne, as distinct from the Throne of His Father. And then,

2. To shew, that the Christian shall partake of this Glory and Honour to sit with Jesus Christ in His Throne.

1. First then I am to *explain the Mystery*, of Christ's sitting with His Father in His Throne; and the Christian's sitting with Him in His Throne, as distinct from the Throne of the Father. And

1. *There is the Throne of the eternal Deity*, in which Christ sits with His Father, after He had conquered the Enemies of our Salvation. There is no Difficulty in conceiving of the eternal Godhead as possessed of a glorious high Throne. For He that is the Maker of all Things, has an unquestionable Right to rule and govern all the Works of His Hands; He is necessarily Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, and His Empire and Dominion is universally extensive over all His Creatures, and all their Actions. And tho' the eternal Deity is every where present in all Places of His Dominion, yet the more peculiar Seat of the Divine Residence, or where the Deity appears most illustrious in His visible Glories, the Regalia of His Empire, the Magnificence of His Palace, and the

the Splendor of His Retinue, is in the highest Heavens; which therefore is called his Throne, *Psal. ciii. 19. He hath prepared, or established, His throne in the heavens. Isa. lxvi. 1. Thus saith the Lord, the heavens is my throne.*

This eternal Deity in the Relation, (or, which I ever suppose to mean the same, in the Person) of the Son, hath condescended to possess, and actuate the whole humane Nature, by a mysterious Union to it, in the Man Jesus: Hence we are told that *the Word*, (that is, the Son of God, who bears the Name of *Logos*, or the Word, *was made flesh, and dwelt among us*, *Joh. i. 14* And lest we should be lead into any Mistakes, who or what this WORD is, and be ready to conceive of Him, as something distinct in his Essence both from God and Man, and so another Order of Being; the Apostle expressly tells us in the first *Verse* of the *Chapter*, That he was *in the beginning*, or *ante omnia*, before any Creature had a Being; and not only *was with God*, when He made the Universe, but *he was God*; even that God by whom all Things were made. Where it is remarkable, that what we render, *and the Word was God*, should be more literally rendered according to the original Greek (a), *and God was this Word*. I would also further remark, that as it is confessed, that by GOD in the middle Clause of the *Verse*, when 'tis said, *the Word was with God*, is evidently meant the eternal Deity, or the supreme divine Being; so by GOD in the last Clause of the *Verse*, when 'tis said, *and God was this Word*, must necessarily be meant the same eternal Deity, or supreme Being: Because the Apostle is manifestly speaking, in both Clauses, of the same Being. And by no Rules of Grammar, or Propriety of Speech, can they possibly be understood to mean two distinct Sorts of Beings, the one GOD properly, the other GOD improperly; and to admit of such a Solecism in Speech, would be to confound all our Ideas, and put it beyond a Possibility of our ever knowing what is meant, by what we read, or hear. But to return.

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(a) Καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

The great End and Design of the Incarnation of this divine *Logos*, or Son of God, was the Recovery of the humane Nature from the Fruits of the Curse, which the Apostacy of our first Parents had involved it under; the bringing of all Mankind, wheresoever the Gospel should be preached, into a Salvable State; and the actual Restoration of every one that truly believeth in Jesus, to the divine Favour; to the Praise of the Glory of the infinite Grace of God, who is ready to shew Mercy, and have Compassion on them that are Ignorant, and out of the Way. This is all ever the sacred Pages plainly declared to be the great End and Design of the Son of God, His taking our Flesh upon Him; hence the Apostle assures us, *Gal. iv. 4, 5, When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

The incarnate Son of God having accomplished the great Ends of his Undertaking, in assisting the humane Nature, so united to Him, to gain a complete Victory over all the Enemies of our Salvation, then resumed His ancient Seat of Glory, and so sat down with His Father in His Throne. Hence we find our *Immanuel* saying, *John. xvii. 4, 5, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify me, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was.* This could not be spoken with Respect to the humane Nature of Jesus Christ; for that humane Nature was not in Being, till a long while after the World had its Beginning; much less was it glorified with the Father before the World was: The Words therefore must have a special Reference to the divine Nature, incarnate in the Man Jesus; for with Respect to His divine Nature only, could Christ say, *Father glorify me, with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was.*

So has the Divine *Logos*, or the Deity, in his Relation or Person, of the eternal Son of God, set down with his Father in his Throne; and that after he became

Incarnate

Incarnate and in our Nature subdued our spiritual Enemies for us. For as he was from Everlasting (as the Son) and One with the Father, possessed before the World was, of the same Glory with the eternal Father; His Incarnation or Assumption of the humane Nature into an Union with himself, no Ways so debases him, as to strip him of the Glories which he had an eternal Right to; but after his Condescension to take Flesh upon him, his Claim still remains good, and *He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, tho' He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*; as the Apostle assures us, *Phil. ii. 6, 7.* And His perfect Accomplishment of the great Work He had undertaken, to the Glory of the Father, in overturning the Kingdom of the Powers of Darkness, and destroying the Works of the Devil; in recovering rebel Subjects from the usurped Dominion of Satan, and reducing them to their Allegiance to their rightful Sovereign; in vindicating the Honour of the Divine Law, and responding the Demands of Divine Justice, does all of it but so much the more rather strengthen the Claim to his ancient Rights; and therefore having overcome, he is again set down with his Father in his Throne.

2. There is also a *Throne, in which the Man Jesus*, united to the Divine *Logos*, or Word, is set down, distinct from the Throne of the Father, and in which all true Christians shall sit with him. There is not only the Throne of God, which is here styled the Father's Throne, in which the *Logos*, or Son of God, sits with the Father; but the Man Jesus, united to the eternal Son of God, as our great Mediator, (and by Virtue of that Union, having gloriously triumphed over all the Enemies to the Purity and Happiness of the humane Nature) seems to have a distinct Throne prepared for him; which is not the same with that Throne in which the Father sits, but is inferior to it, and yet next thereto in Glory and Dignity. To sit in a Throne, denotes high Honour and Dignity, Rule and Government. Thus the Man Jesus, or rather Jesus the Mediator has a Throne assigned

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to Him, in that He is exalted in Dignity and Rule far above all created Beings; and yet is subordinate therein unto God and the Father. Glory and Honour, Dominion and Power, beyond what can be challenged by any mere Creature, is evidently ascribed to Him in the sacred Pages. Hence He, the Mediator, is the Head-Lord and King of His Church; *Col. i. 18. He is the head of the body, the church.* He rules and governs in the Church, appointing to it such Laws and Ordinances as are agreeable to His Will; and this high Honour belongs to Him, to be obeyed by all within the Pale of the Church; and 'tis an Invasion of His kingly Authority and Rule, for any to take upon them to impose Laws and Ordinances upon His People, in their religious Worship. Yea, His Rule and Dominion extendeth over all Creatures; *the government of the world is laid upon His shoulders,* and Men on Earth, and Angels in Heaven owe a Subjection to Him, and are commanded to *worship him.* So that the Extent of His Authority, and the Glory of His Dignity is above all Creatures, and come the nearest to the Glories of the Deity; and therefore is often in Scripture expressed by that of *His sitting at the right hand of God;* as, *Eph. i. 20, 21.* where the Apostle speaking of the Glories of the Mediator, after the Resurrection of the humane Nature from the Power of the Grave, says, that God hath *set him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.*

This superexcellent Exaltation of the Man Jesus, united to the Son of God, (or the Mediator,) tho' it unspeakably transcends the greatest Honours of the highest Angels, (for *unto which of them hath God said, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee (a)? or, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool (b)?*) yet

(a) *Heb. i. 5.* (b) *ver. 13.*

yet it comes short of the infinite and unrivaled Honours of the eternal Deity (a); the divine Infinitude reserving to himself the absolute Supremacy, and the last Resort of all Honour, Worship, and Obedience. So that this Honour and Dominion is but derived to the Mediator, and flows from the Fountain of the Deity, and returns thither again; and therefore is subordinate to the incommunicable Glories of the Godhead. The God-man and Mediator has no Original inderived, and independent Right to this Throne of His Glory, but it is a Power and Authority, a Dignity and Glory delegated, and conferred upon Him by the eternal Father. Hence our Saviour said, *Joh. xvii. 2. Thou hast given Him power over all flesh; and ver. 22. the glory which thou gavest me;* as expressive of the Derivation of that Power and Glory, which belonged to Him, as Mediator, from His Father, who is the original Source, in whom all is independently laid up, and from whom all primarily flows. Tho' the eternal Son, with Respect to His Essence, or divine Nature, is one with the Father; yet, as this Son of God is united to the humane Nature, and so the divine and humane Nature in Christ Jesus constitutes a Mediator between God and Man, thus there is evidently a proper Subordination and Inferiority in the Person of the Mediator, to the eternal Father; and so the Throne of the Mediator is below the Throne of the Deity. This Subordination and Inferiority to His Father, our blessed Lord readily acknowledged upon every Occasion; as when He was speaking of His Authority to give eternal Life unto his Sheep, and the Impossibility of any ones plucking them out of His Hands, because of the Power He was, as Mediator, invested with, yet says He, *John x. 29. My Father is greater than all; q. d. if you should be ready to doubt my Power and Authority, and fear whether you might not perish,*
notwithstanding

(a) *Duplex est Christi Dominium, in Creaturas; alterum essentialiale, quod ab eterno habet commune cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto, nimirum quatenus est Deus; alterum vero quatenus est Mediator.* Camero. p. 371.

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notwithstanding your Faith in me, yet surely you cannot but see your selves safe in my Father's Hands, He is greater than all your Enemies, and greater than I am; and therefore, tho' it were possible for any to pluck you out of my Hand, (which it is not) yet none is able to pluck you out of my Father's Hands. Thus again He comforts His Disciples, under the sorrowful Apprehensions of His corporal Withdraw from them, with this Consideration, *Joh. xiv. 28. My Father is greater than I.* This was eminently typified by *Joseph's* Advancement in the Court of *Pharaoh*. *Joseph* was taken from a poor mean imprisoned State and Condition, and advanced to be the second Man in the Kingdom of *Egypt*; the highest Honours were conferred upon him, and Dominion was given him over all the Land of *Egypt*, and yet *Pharaoh* reserved the proper Regalia to himself: Said the King of *Egypt* to *Joseph*, *Gen. xli. 40. Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled, only in the throne will I be greater than thou.* Thus with Respect to the Honour and Authority belonging to the Mediator, God the Father says, Thou shalt be over my vastly extended Empire, all Principalities and Dominions shall be subject to thee, and according to thy Word shall all they all be ruled; but yet the eternal Father hath not placed Him upon his own Throne, but reserved the supreme Rights thereof to Himself, saying, Only in the Throne will I be greater than thou.

I would further remark, that this Throne, this Dignity and Authority is conferred upon the God-man Mediator, as the glorious Reward of His perfect Obedience and Sufferings; this the Apostle once and again discourses on, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, as *Heb. xi. 9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour: And again, Heb. x. 12. This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.* So also, *Heb. xii. 2. Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Not in the throne of God; for it is impossible that the humane Nature should be advanced

ced to an Equality with the Deity, in Glory and Dominion; but *at the right hand of the throne of God*, that is in a Throne distinct from the Throne of God, and at His right Hand, as being next unto Him in glorious Dignity; and all this as a Reward of His Obedience and Suffering, because he endured the Cross and despised the Shame, underwent the Suffering of Death, and made Himself a Sacrifice for Sins. For if he Had failed in the Perfection of His Obedience, and the plenary Satisfaction of His Sufferings, He would have been for ever, with Respect to the humane Nature, detained in the Prison of the Grave, and never have partook of the Honour to sit at the Father's right Hand: But because such a Failure was impossible to Him, who was assisted by the divine Nature united to the humane (and in View of the Certainty of His Victory) it pleased the Father to admit Him to some Beginnings of His Glory, and Exercise of His Authority, even before He had completed His Conquest by His Resurrection from the Dead.

Thus Jesus Christ the God-man and Mediator has a Throne of His own, distinct from the Throne of God the Father, belonging to Him, in which He sits and reigns as Lord and King, and according to his Word shall the Universe of Beings be ruled, till His Enemies are all made His Foot-stool, and the elect of God are gathered in from the four Winds; and *then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; (when He shall have put down all rule, and authority, and power, --- and when all things shall be subdued unto Him,) then shall the Son also Himself be subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all*; as the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28. Which mysterious words, if I may attempt to say any Thing to, I would thus humbly offer my Thoughts about, namely; That after the general Resurrection, and the Judgment that immediately follows upon it, *then cometh the end*, or then will be perfected and completed the whole End and Design of the Mediator's kingly Power and Authority; for then all His and the Christian's Enemies will be totally subdued; every
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true Christian will have arrived at the heavenly World, and be confirmed in His State of perfect Holiness ; because there will then be no Remains of Sin in him, nor any Temptation surrounding of him ; so that there will be no further Occasion for the exerting of a kingly Authority, either in subduing the Obstinate, or sparing the Penitent ; and therefore this kingly Authority which was delegated to the Mediator, to carry on the great Designs He had undertaken, seeing that those Designs are fully accomplished, shall *now be delivered up to God, even the Father*, and He (the Father) shall now take upon Him the more immediate Administration of the Government of the Universe *Then shall the Son also Himself become subject to Him that put all things under Him* ; then the Mediator (resigning up His Kingdom to the Father) shall be evidently and visibly in Subjection to the Father, as all Things have been till now put under Subjection to Him the Mediator ; and as hitherto all the Services and Adorations of the true Believers, in all Ages of the World, have been paid to the Father, more mediately, in and by the God-man and Mediator, now all Homage, Obedience and praise shall be offered more immediately unto the Father ; the whole Company of the Faithful, and general Assembly of the Church of the first born, with Jesus Christ at the Head of that glorious Host, shall more directly prostrate themselves, with their loud Acclamations of Joy, Thanksgiving and Adoration before God, even the Father, and so *God shall be all in all (a)*.

And yet Jesus Christ will still have a Throne of His own, in the Honour and dignity belonging to Him, far above that which shall be conferred upon the highest Angels ; even as great Degrees of Glory, in the nearest Approach to God, and as Head of the Redeemed of the Lord,

(a) *Non se communicabit Deus Ecclesia sua mediate per Christum, sed immediate per se ; quoniam deleta peccato, et abolitis ac pessundatis omnibus Ecclesia hostibus, opere Redemptionis peracto, non magno opere opus erit Mediatore, qui inter Deum et Creaturam intercedat ; siquidem Creatura Deum recta accedet, et immediate Gloriam et Sanctitatem ejus participabit.* Camero. p. 372

Lord, as the human Nature, in its utmost Spirituality and Purity, is capable of, and only below the Deity.

Here in this Throne, belonging to the Man Jesus, shall every victorious Christian come at last to sit with him. Which leads me into the Second thing I proposed, viz.

2. That every victorious Christian shall partake of this high Honour, to sit with Christ in his Throne, as he is set down with his Father, in his Throne. This, as I observed in the Beginning, speaks both the Greatness and the Certainty of the Rewards that shall be conferred upon the Overcomer.

1. The Greatness of the Rewards. *He shall sit with me in my Throne.* We have seen that Jesus Christ is possessed of a Throne of Dignity and Honour, far above all Creatures, and next to the eternal Deity, and in this Throne it is, that he that overcometh is to sit with Him; that is, in His Presence and as Sharer in His Honours; which shews that their Rewards will be unutterably great.

* They shall sit with Him; they shall be admitted into the same Place where the exalted Man Jesus is, namely in the Heavens, or Paradise of God. Some time after our Blessed Lord rose from the Dead, He ascended up into Heaven, and that before many Witnesses. For while they that beheld his Ascension, stood gazing with Astonishment at so strange a Sight, the Angels said to them, *Act. i. 11. Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.* As Christ Jesus is gone away into Heaven, so shall the Souls of Believers go thither to be with Him, when their Bodies die; which made the Apostle say *2 Cor. v. 1. We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* And when the general Resurrection shall come on, then the Dead Bodies of the Saints, which sleep in the Dust, shall be raised from their Graves,

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Graves, and be united to their Souls, be enlivened and animated by them, and ascend into the Heavens, to the immediate Presence of the Redeemer: Hence the same Apostle tells us, that the raised Bodies of the Saints, and they that are found alive upon the Earth at the second Coming of the Lord, shall be *caught up to meet the Lord, and shall be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thess. iv. 17. And this our Lord gave his Disciples Assurance of, when he was about to take His leave of them; said He, *in my Father's house*, that is in Heaven, *there are many mansions,--- I go to prepare a place for you; I will come again, and receive you to my self, that where I am, there ye may be also*, John xiv. 2, 3. And so in this last Prayer for them, He makes it one of His earnest Requests to His eternal Father for them, *Joh. xvii. 24. Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am.*

And as they shall be with Jesus, so shall they also partake of the Honours and Glories that belong to their exalted Head. Hence Christ said, in the Place last mentioned, they shall *be with me, to behold my glory*. And in the 22 ver. of that Chap He says, *the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them*. And indeed this is denoted by their sitting with Him in His Throne, that is, they shall participate of the Honour and Grandeur, the unutterable Joy and Pleasure, the unsearchable Fulness and Riches which belong to the Man Jesus, as their crowned Head. Hence the Apostle Peter says, *An entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. i. 11. And the Apostle John says, *He hath made us kings*, Rev. i. 6. And the Apostle Paul says, *We shall reign with him*, 2 Tim. ii. 12. So that the Rewards of the Conqueror will be an Interest and Share in the distinguishing Honours, conferred upon Christ Jesus: Hence therefore we are told that *we shall be like him*, 1 John iii. 2. The same Glories which he is possess'd of, shall every true Christian have conferred upon him; only still in Subordi-
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nation to him their Head, in a lower Measure and Degree; and with a suitable Difference of Degree also between one Christian and another, according to their different Measures of Fidelity and Serviceableness to their Lord and Master. They shall be glorified together with him, and that as joint Heirs of their heavenly Inheritance, by the Priviledge of Adoption, thro' Him; as we are told, *Rom. viii. 17. If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him,* if so be that with Him we manfully undergo the Fatigues of the War and conflict with our Spiritual Enemies, resisting them unto the Death, *that we may be also glorified together.*

How unspeakably great then are the Rewards of the victorious Christian, to sit with Christ in his Throne? Who can utter the ineffable Glories of being with the enthroned Jesus, partaking of his Glory, and reigning with him? It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when He, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him, in Glory. But the Eye hath not seen, nor the Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, the high Honours, the the glorious Dignity, which the eternal King will confer upon the Overcomer. But then,

2. It speaks also the Certainty of the Rewards. *Even, as I am sit down with my Father in his throne.* Not only after the same Manner, as I first overcame, and then sat down; but as certainly as I, who overcame, am set down with my Father in his Throne, so surely shall he that overcomes sit with Me in My Throne. So has he, that cannot lye, pawned his Word for it, and that with the greatest Assurance, namely, as sure as the Son of God himself has sit down with his Father, in his Throne, or as sure as the eternal Deity sits in his own Throne; so sure shall he that overcometh sit with Jesus Christ in his Throne. And can any thing be more sure and certain than this is? 'tis as sure as God is God.

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And needs must it be so, because 'tis the glorious Fruit and Purchase of the Blood of the incarnate Son of God, the least Drop whereof cannot possibly be lost or spilt in vain, as to the blessed Efficacy and Rewards of it. Hence is the Triumphant Song of the Church, *Rev. v. 9. Thou art worthy, — for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and (so) hast made us unto our God kings.* Thus Jesus Christ hath purchased this Reward for us, with the most inestimable Price of His own Blood, which renders it sure and certain: For because He hath bought and paid for it a valuable Consideration, every way equal to the Glories the Christian hopes for; therefore it is but strictly just, that all, for whom the Purchase is made, should have a Right to the Possession; and consequently he that overcometh is an undoubted Heir to the Crown. Hence it is stiled *the inheritance of the Saints in light*; *Col. i. 12.* an Inheritance they are made meet for, and have a Light to, by being delivered from the Power of Darknes, and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, who it is that hath redeemed them by His Blood. 'Tis such an Inheritance as nothing can frustrate their entring upon the Possession of: Not Death; for that only disjoynes them of that Flesh and Blood which cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, and gives Liberty to their Souls to tour away to their native Home; and purging the Body from its earthly Constitution, prepares it for it's rising a spiritual one, that it may ascend to the Regions of superior Light and Joy. Nor can any Law withstand their Claim; because the Case has been already tried, and Jesus Christ the Righteous, their Advocate with the Father, has answered all the Pleas, and satisfied all the Demands of the Law, so that none can put a Bar in their Way, by laying any Thing to their Charge. Nor can any Usurper eject them, and force the Inheritance out of their Hands; because the incarnate Son of God Himself stands bound to see their Title made good, and secure them in the Possession of it; and He is stronger than any strong Man armed.

In short; Jesus Christ's sitting in His Throne is an Assurance of the Certainty of it, that every true Christian shall sit there with Him. For it is as their Head that he is set down in His Throne, and, as I have before observed; as it fares with Him, so will it necessarily fare with the several Members of His Body. Hence 'tis that our Lord said to His Disciples, *Joh. xiv. 19. Because I live, ye shall live also.* Jesus Christ sits upon His Throne, as the great Head of the humane Nature, restored to the divine Favour, and to the forfeited Inheritance; and consequently all that are the Members of His Body, (as every true Christian is) have a full Claim to, and shall certainly possess, all that Life and Immortality, which He hath recovered for them. And tho' there are innumerable who partake of the humane Nature, that never will have any Lot or Portion in the Glories of the heavenly World; yet it is not owing to any Defect in the glorious Mediator, who personates the whole humane Nature, and makes the most free and general Offers of His purchased Benefits; but it arises from their wilful Refusal to own and submit to Him as Lord, as well as Saviour; and their avowed espousing the Interest of the Powers of Darknes, and joining in a Confederacy with them against the Crown and Dignity of our Lord Jesus Christ: Whereas for all such as sincerely renounce the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, He has taken an actual Possession of the glorious high Throne, and 'tis in their Names that he hath done so, and that it might be sure to them. Hence he said to His Disciples in the forementioned, *Joh. xiv. 2. I go to prepare a place for you:* And accordingly the Apostle *Paul*, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the Glories within the Vail, that is in Heaven, says, *Heb. vi. 20. Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.* So that the true Christian shall most certainly arrive at last, after his tedious Conflict with his ghostly Adversaries is over, to that World, where he shall be intirely freed from all that would soil the Purity, and break in upon the Harmony of his Soul, where he shall be out of the Reach of any Danger, from all that here proved inimical to him, and

fought his Destruction; and where he shall be completely happy, in his consummate Holiness, full Enjoyments, and endless Satisfaction; and this in the immediate Presence, and partaking of the Glories of the enthroned Mediator. This Honour have all His Saints. Thus the Rewards of the Conqueror are as sure and certain, as they are great and glorious. Conquer and Reign.

Thus I have endeavoured (but alas, with what weak and confused Lines!) to draw the Character of the Christian Hero, passing from his militant, to his Triumphant State; with an unfainting Struggle, and an insuperable Firmness of Soul, conflicting with corrupt Self, a vain World, malicious Devil, and the Terrors and Bands of Death it self, till finally at the Review, in the Resurrection World, his consummate General shall openly applaud his Conduct, and confer upon him such matchless Rewards, as the Tokens of his distinguishing Favour, as shall be to the Admiration of surrounding Angels, and the endless Envy and Rage of gnashing Devils.

So much may suffice for the doctrinal handling of these Words, in which I have offered what is most plain and obvious. I proceed now to make some Improvement of the whole. And,

Use. 1. The first Use of this Doctrine may be for *Information*; and I shall wave many other, and mention only two Instances.

1. This Doctrine may serve to *undeceive* us, and shew us our Friends from our Foes. Man is not wont to hug an open Enemy in his Bosom, when he knows he is so, and that he only waits an Opportunity to do him a Mischief; we are ordinarily more upon our Guard than this comes to, against such as have discovered their Enmity at us, that we may not, if possible, give them any Advantage to accomplish their malicious Designs upon us. Our greatest Danger lies here, lest, while the Adversary is unknown to us, and we are wholly Strangers to the mischievous Devices he hath formed against us, we should incautiously allow him to get within us; and so give him
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the Opportunity to prosecute his baneful Intentions; and give us the mortal Stab, e'er we are aware. As *Joab* served *Abner*; whom he *took aside*, as tho' he had a Matter of great Importance and Secrecy to communicate to him, as a special Friend, and then, while he was off from his Guard, and suspected no Evil, *he smote him under the fifth rib, that he dyed*, 2 Sam. iii. 27. And yet, from our too easy Credulity, and a peculiar Fondness which we naturally have for Self, which enclines us to esteem those that commend us, how readily are we betrayed into this fatal Mistake? by such as will but take upon them to sooth our Vanity, and flatter us with the fair Pretensions of serving us. This is peculiarly our Danger in spiritual Regards, where we are more easily imposed upon with a false Appearance, from the greater apparent Distance of invisible unseen Things; and where the Consequents of a Deceit are the most pernicious to us.

Now this Doctrine will serve to rectify our Error, as it does the Part of a faithful Friend, who has overheard the secret and malicious Contrivances of our Enemies, and gives us timely and fair Warning, that we may no longer be imposed upon by their insidious Caresses, but may look upon them as they really are, and treat them accordingly. This shews us that Sin, Satan, and the World, whatever be their specious Shews of Friendship, are really the Christian's worst Enemies, as being combined in a strong Confederacy against him; and that therefore, as ever we tender our spiritual and eternal Welfare, as we value the Lives of our immortal Souls, we must be upon our Guard against them, and when they speak us fair, believe them not, for a Lye is in their right-hand; and he that trusts to them, does it at his utmost Peril. Particularly,

1. This shews us that *Sin is not our Friend, but our worst Enemy*. We have seen that carnal corrupt Self is one of the Enemies that the Christian is to maintain a War with and overcome; and what is this but Sin dwelling in us? which we are to kill, destroy, mortifie and subdue, that we may live. He that truly looks upon Sin as an
Enemy,

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Enemy, is not wholly out of Danger of being hurt by it; as we see by the many Imperfections of the best of Men in this World; but he that takes it to be his Friend, and as such listens to it's Counsels, and is ready to do all he can to gratify it, may assure himself, whatever his present Thoughts are, that he is in the last hazard of being ruined by it. And yet how easily are the greater Part of Mankind deceived with it's fair Shews and goodly Appearances, the Charms of it's Voice, and the Beauty of it's Countenance? How easily are they drawn into a close Friendship with it? while it flatters them, why, 'tis but what is natural to them; and how can that possibly do them any Hurt? yea, it will be so far from being injurious to them, that it will afford them Abundance of Pleasure, and be greatly advantageous to them. So does it deceive them into an Opinion of it's being their hearty Friend, when in Reality it is all the while carrying on the most base and villainous Design of compassing their utter Destruction. Hence the Apostle warns the Hebrews of *the deceitfulness of sin*, Heb. iii. 13. and the old Man, or Body of Sin, which we are to put off, is stiled, *deceitful lusts*, Eph. iv. 22. Were Mankind but more thoroughly apprized of the Falseness and Treachery, and of the Mischief and sad Consequents of Sin, they would not be so ready to harbour it in their Bosom, and comply with its Suggestions at every Turn. But alas! they heedlessly, and too willingly suffer themselves to be imposed upon by the gay Phantome, and inconsiderately follow the dancing Meteor, as if it's Aim were to lead them the most direct Way Home, to the Satisfaction of their Desires, in the Enjoyment of that which is truly good; till at length they are left to lie down tired, and bewildred, in everlasting Darkness, and Despair. Whereas if they would but take the Pains to examine the Pretensions, and not take Things upon Trust, for the Sake of a few fine Cloaths and a smiling Air, they would soon find, that Sin aims at nothing less than their Advantage; and is perpetually contriving, and
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unwearied in pursuing their greatest Hurt and Damage, as its main End.

For it strips them of all that is truly valuable, and ought to be dear to them. What did ever any Man get in the Ways of Sin? Suppose, for Instance, the Courses of Intemperance and Unchastity, which one would think, by the Prevalency of them, the World looked upon as the most pleasurable Gratifications. Is it not very observable, that very many are Sufferers in their secular Interest by harbouring these Lusts? and the Maintenance of them call for such a Waste of their Time, and Consumption of their Estate, as anon reduces them to Straits and Wants, and they are left by them in a Condition, scarce above the Beggar: And at the same Time; do we not see many others crawling about the Streets like walking Spectres, with bloated or emaciated Bodies, enflamed Eyes, trembling Hands, and weak Knees; or laid up with tormenting Pains, or wasting Diseases, and brought down to the Gates of the Grave, e'er they have lived out half their Days? And now, (bating their Religion and the Deference which every Man owes to his Maker) can any Man act the Part of a reasonable Creature, tho' but in a very low Degree, and think that the Pleasures of an intemperate and impure Life, are a sufficient Balance for all of this Mischief which he certainly runs the Risque of? Surely a little Thought would shew us, that these Vices are really our Enemies, how friendly soever they appear, and that it would be but a Point of Prudence in us to keep them at the greatest Distance, that they may not get within us, and have the Opportunity of Bringing so grievous an Evil upon us.

But besides, what Shame and Reproach does Sin expose Persons to? 'Tis the Observation of the Wise Man, *Prov. xiv. 34. Sin is a reproach to any people.* The World is apt enough to take Notice of the Failings of People, and their Miscarriages often expose them to Ridicule and Contempt. Christianity is indeed become honourable, and the Profession

Profession of it brings a Man into Repute; but alas! how many are there that wear the Christian Name, who forfeit the Style, and lose all the Honours of their Profession, while they live, and act, and speak, so contrary to the holy Laws of the Gospel, as they do? And tho' there are some Vices that seem to be reputable, yet upon a due Consideration it will be found, that they render mean and contemptible those that are guilty of them. Lying and Cheating are allowed to be dishonourable Vices; and yet does not he bring Contempt upon himself, who can be guilty of both, in the Prosecution of an impure Desire? How many would kindle into a Flame, and be ready to draw upon the Man that should pass a Flout, or a Jeer upon them, when they are sober; who yet assuredly bring themselves into such a despicable Condition, as makes them to talk and act ridiculously, and exposes them to the Scoff and Reproach of all that are about them? And is this friendly done now, thus to expose a Man to Contempt? Or would not you look upon him as an Enemy, that should go to make your Name infamous? Verily, whatever the gay World thinks of it, there is nothing so ignominious as Sin is; and it will ever argue a mean Soul, to be in Subjection to any fordid Lust. Thus *shame shall be the promotion of fools,* Prov. iii. 35.

And add to all; that Sin robs us of our Virtue, the most valuable Jewel a rational Creature has to boast of; and lays waste the inward Peace, Satisfaction and Joy of Soul, which naturally results from a virtuous and religious life; and fills the Mind with Guilt and Remorse. So does it take the Crown from off our Heads, and lays our Glory in the Dust; and not satisfied with depriving us of what is most dear to us, it aims at nothing more than the very Life of the Soul; as tho' it had receiv'd a Commission, like that of the King of Syria to his Captains against *Ahab*, 1 Kings xxii. 31. *Fight neither with small, nor great, save only with the king of Israel.* So that however any may take Sin for their Bosom Friend, and enter into a Confederacy with it, they

do but deceive themselves with vain Expectations of Advantage from it ; for it will not only dethrone them from their Excellency, and stain all their Glory, but if the Deceit be not time'y discovered, and prudently prevented, it will bring inevitable Death and Misery upon them : For *the soul that sins shall die*, Ezek. xviii. 4.

2. This also informs us, that the *World is not a Friend, but an Enemy to us*. There is nothing more common, than for Persons to be mistaken in their Thoughts about this World ; they are very prone to imagine, that because there is something of an Aptness in the Men, and Things of this World, to their Bodies and external Senses and outward Accommodations, that therefore the World must needs be a very good Friend to them ; hence it is, that the Generality of Mankind are courting its Favour, with an eager Passion ; are pleased with its Smiles, hearken to its Motions, and readily comply with its Suggestions : Little dreaming that all this while the World's but a gay Cheat, and under the Colour of answering to our Necessity, and rendering our Lives more comfortable, it is but carrying on a close Intrigue to ruin us in our spiritual and eternal Interest.

This therefore may serve to shew us our Mistake, that the World is not so much our Friend as we think for ; and that those who so eagerly court it, as tho' there were no Happiness but what results from the most intimate Correspondence, and closest Familiarity with it, labour under a very great Error, and are in utmost Danger of losing all true and substantial Felicity, in their Fondness for the Shadow. For what is there in this World that does not deceive us ? Did ever any Man find the Enjoyments of the World to answer his Expectations ? Have we not for ever found that it has served us, at least, as bad as *Laban* did *Jacob* ; and when we have thought we were embracing a Beauty, it proved but a Blear-eye ? Were its Performances ever equal to its Promises ? Whom did it ever bless with Joy without Sorrow, Ease without Pain, Health, and Wealth, and Ho-

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nour unallay'd with Indigency, Reproach, and Sickness? It promiseth these indeed, if we will but hearken to its Dictates, and follow its Directions; but it never yet was as good as its Word. This is plainly evident if we look among the Poor, who are continually driving forward in a painful Drudgery after the World, in Hopes of what they never come to: And if we examine the wealthy and great, upon a little Recollection they will be able to satisfy us, that there is nothing in this World to be depended on; the biggest worldly Advantages are attended with the greater Pain and Uneasiness. So the simple Infant, pleased with the bright Flame, eagerly catches at it, till the Smart gives him a painful Conviction that he is cheated.

Now one would be ready to think, that this Trick and Cheat, which the World puts upon us, is enough to make us chagrine and out of Conceit with it. For what Man is there that can readily esteem him as a Friend, that designedly disappoints him, tho' but in a small Matter? And is it possible then, that we should look upon the World as our Friend, when it cheats us in our most valuable and important Interests? It draws away our Minds and Affections from spiritual and heavenly Things, and basely paums a Pebble upon us, instead of a Pearl. It flatters us with the Hopes of a long and a merry Life here, that we may put off our Provision for an eternal Life, till, alas! how many are unexpectedly overtaken with the Shades of Death, and find no Room for Repentance. And is not this then a cruel Enemy? And shall we suffer our selves to be taken with its Promises, as the silly Fish is by the shining of the Bait? Certain it is, whatever the World may pretend, it may well be number'd among the worst of our Enemies. For tho' of its own Nature it might pass as a neutral State, neither good nor evil, in itself; yet since it has sided with our Lusts, and is improved as a Tool in their Hands, secretly to undermine our best Interest, and sap the Foundation of our substantial Happiness, it is
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become truly inimical to us, and ought so to be esteemed by us.

Thus how great an Enemy does vain sinful Companions prove to many a poor thoughtless Creature? How many have hopefully set out in the Paths of Virtue, and bid fair for the Kingdom of Heaven? but all on a sudden they have turned short about, thro' the attractive Power of the bad Company that has fallen in their Way, and by their Influence have been whirled on in a continual Round of Revelling and Debauchery, till, giddy with their violent Motion, they sink into perfect Obscurity. The vain Youth is ready to think, the boon Companions are his best Friends, because they sooth his Lusts, encrease his noisy Mirth, and gratify his carnal Appetites; and he follows them, like a Fool, till he is intoxicated with them, and stript of his Reason and Humanity in the House of Revelling; or till a Dart strike thro' his Liver in the Chambers of Wantonness; till he is lead, the Derision of the Crowd, to the Correction of the Stocks; or alas! has damned his Soul to eternal Misery, and becomes the Sport of Devils, for Company's sake. *For the companion of fools shall be destroyed, Prov. xiii. 20.*

And thus the Enjoyments of the World often prove baneful to the immortal Soul. The three Master-vices of it accost us with a Pretence of bringing Comfort to us, but they really administer Matter of Sorrow and Vexation of Spirit. They that are linked in a close Correspondence with the Profits, the Pleasures and the Honours of the World, always keep at a Distance from God; and, not seldom, are put upon trespassing upon the Rules of Equity, and provoke the Cry of the injured and oppressed against them. This tripple Alliance is formed directly against Innocence, and the Deity; and he that comes into it must not, cannot spare Time for serious Devotion to his Maker; nor boggle at doing injurious and offensive Things to his Neighbour, when Religion and Charity stand in the Way of their Interest.

Hence we see so many neglect the Worship of God in their Families and Closets, and refuse to let the Day of the Lord enjoy its Rest from their unnecessary Labours. Hence it is, that so many cannot spare a few Minutes every Day, for a serious Consideration of the Nature, Worth and Dignity, the State and Condition, and what, and where, will be the everlasting Residence of their own precious and immortal Souls; and all from the Influence of the World, which keeps them in a perpetual Hurry, earnestly reaching, and vehemently labouring after what they count a Sufficiency of these Things. So do they foolishly prefer Earth to Heaven, and lose an incorruptible Inheritance, for the sake of an empty fading perishing one. Hence is that awful Warning of our Saviour, *Matth. xix. 23. Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven:* Because the Enmity of this World to the heavenly World is so great, that there is the utmost Danger lest he that has an Abundance of the good Things of this Life, should take up his Contentment in them, and seek no further, and so come short of the Kingdom of Heaven. Hence the Apostle gives that Injunction to *Timothy*, *1 Tim. vi. 17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God.* He that trusts in the Enjoyments of this World must expect to be served as *Sifera* was by *Fael*; after a smiling Countenance, a kind Welcome, and the Entertainment of a Lordly Dish, the Nail shall be driven thro' his Temples, till at the World's Feet he bows, he falls, where he bows there he falls down dead.

What need have we then, since the World is such an Enemy to our true and endless Happiness, always to maintain a fearful Apprehension of the Danger we are in; lest while we are necessarily concerned with the Affairs of it, and find ourselves accommodated in our lower Interests by it, we should hug it as a Friend; and give it the Advantage by our too easy hearkening to it, and
ready

ready Compliance with it, to prove in the Conclusion fatal and destructive to us.

3. This further shews us, that the *Devil is not our Friend, but our Enemy*. Indeed Mankind has generally such a fixed Opinion of the Devil, as that they are ready enough, in many Cases, to conclude him to be their Enemy; the Thoughts of him strike a Terror into them, and the Apprehensions but of his appearing to them would raise their Hair, make their Blood run cold, and put them into a very great Consternation. But yet, alas! in those Respects in which he is most an Enemy to us, the greatest Part of the World is but little sensible of it, and are not so well apprised of their Danger from him, as to be upon their Guard, to prevent his malicious Devices taking place upon them; but are too prone to hearken to him, as if he were their very good Friend, and designed them all imaginable Good-will.

We have seen, that the *Devil is an Adversary that goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour*, whom the true Christian, stedfast in his Faith, resists and overcomes; and yet are not many deceived with a vain Expectation of Friendship from him? How readily do they believe him, when he speaks them fair, tho' he is *the Father of Lies*? As our first Parents credited him, when he said, *Ye shall not surely die* (a), and run the Risk of the divine Threatening by hearkening to him; so does every Sinner now; and this is the constant Language of their Actions, that he is so much their Friend, that they may believe what he says. For tho' God hath denounced His Wrath and Indignation against the Workers of Iniquity, yet Satan tells them, there will be no Danger, all will be well enough with them; and they may get safe to Heaven, notwithstanding their committing such Abominations; and they readily believe him, and simply pass on, and are punished.

Nay,

(a) Gen. 3. 4.

Nay, tho' he be the most vile, envious, malicious, and mischievous Spirit, that has brought all the Unhappiness and Misery upon the humane Nature, which it labours under, or is exposed to, yet how prone are Men to esteem all his guilful Fawnings as good Meanings; and to conclude that he aims at doing them a Service, when his Intention is to destroy them. Thus when he said to our first Parents, *God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods (a)*; it raised a Jealousy in their Minds, as if God had forbidden what would have been beneficial to them, and they looked upon Satan as kinder than their Maker. Thus the Sinner takes the foul Spirit into his Bosom, as tho' he were his best Friend; and while he tempts him to rebel against the Commands of God his rightful Sovereign, he foolishly supposes (for that is the Language of his Actions) that the infernal Spirit offers him fairer, and shews him a more direct Way to Happiness; and so he yields himself up to his Influence and Guidance, not considering that he *was a murderer from the beginning (b)*.

Thus it is, when the Devil suggests to Men to cast off Fear, and restrain Prayer before God; when he excites in them the infernal Disposition to belch forth their hellish Oaths and Curses; when he kindles the impure Flames of Lust within them; when he stirs them up to Rage, Envy, and Malice; when he calls upon them to fall down and worship him, and he will bestow the Glories of this World upon them; they are apt to be taken with his fair Promises, forget that he is an Enemy, and rashly imagine that he is all on a sudden become their good Friend; and hence they cherish his Motions in their Breasts, hearken to his Counsels, follow his Directions, and are at his Beck, and so are lead captive by him at his Will and Pleasure.

But

(a) *Gen.* 3. 5. (b) *John* 8. 44.

But let it be remember'd, that this is the grand Enemy of thy Soul, and of all Good ; and whenever thou art tempted to an evil Thing, it is Satan, the Adversary, that stands at thy right Hand, and intices thee thereto ; and however he may fawn and cringe, and transform himself as into an Angel of Light, yet there are seven Abominations in his Heart : It will be safer for thee to trust to the Crocodile's Tears, and take up thy Shelter in the Covert of Dragons, than rely upon his fair Promises ; his tenderest Compassions are perfect Cruelty ; when he smiles he means to destroy ; and if you look to his Den, you will find (*vestigia nulla retrorsum*) there is no returning from it.

4. This Doctrine serves to teach us, that *God and Religion are our best Friends*. For, how is it that any are made victorious over their worst Enemies ? but by a Life of serious Religion, and the divine Aids assisting of them therein. And whence flow the Rewards of the Victor ? but from God the infinite Fountain of all Good, and the Fruits of pure and undefiled Religion. If therefore they that plainly discover our Enemies to us, and give us faithful Notice of their Designs upon us, and warn us of the Danger we are in ; if they that furnish us with the most suitable Weapons, espouse our Cause, encourage our Hearts, and strengthen our Hands to the Battle ; if they that give us the best Counsel and Advice, and direct us in the properest Methods to encounter our Adversaries, that spy out all our Advantages, and apprise us of them, that shew us our weak Place, that we may the more strongly guard it ; if they that are ever ready to assist us, that place themselves as in the Front of the Battle, are a continual Defence and Safeguard to us, and lead us on to assured and complete Victory ; if such as these are to be esteemed our best Friends, then God and Religion are so to be accounted of by us ; for all our Might and Skill for the Conflict, all our Success and Rewards, we are evidently beholden to them for.

How

How should this Thought render God and Religion most precious and valuable in our Eyes? How thankful should we be for their offered Help? how submissive to their Direction? and how heartily should we love and honour them? Can we think of a Being so great and august, so wise and just, so compassionate and kind, as all the Works both of Creation, and Providence, declare our God to be, and not see our Obligations to reverence and adore Him? Can we consider Him as the Author of our Being, who hourly upholds our Soul in Life, and daily loads us with His Benefits? Can we take a View of the daily Wonders of His Redeeming Love, and Grace, and Mercy, appearing in the whole Oeconomy of our Salvation by Jesus Christ our Lord, and not be filled with Admiration and Praise? Where shall we find a Friend equal to our good and bountiful God? who preserves and supplies us in this World, and has prepared for us an eternal Life in the World to come. And shall we not then count Religion also, under God, our best Friend? What is it, but this, that makes the divine Being to become our Friend? Is there any thing pleasing to Him equal to this? or, can any thing without Religion make us like God, and fit us for the blissful Enjoyment of Him? Whence is all the Virtue and Innocence that adorns us? Whence the inward Peace and Joy of Soul that delights us? And whence our eternal Society and Fellowship with the Blessed above? Are they not all the beautiful Offspring of this happy Parent, Religion? How stately and majestick are all its Revelations? How rational and candid are its Precepts? And how nearly does all of it concern us? And how necessary is it to our present Comfort, as well as our future Happiness? “ Religion (says a late Writer *) has a Superiority “ above all other things, and is as necessary to our living happy in this World, as it is to our being saved “ in

* *Gent. lib. p. 302.*

“ in the next.” For what but Religion can correct the Viciosity of our Natures, subdue our Tempers, and soften our Manners, and make us kind and beneficent, just and sincere to all about us? Since then Religion is so amiable, so delightful, and serviceable to us in both Worlds, surely we ought to value its Friendship, to pay our utmost Regards to it, and never count it well with us but when we are in its Company.

And yet, as strange as it may seem to be, alas! the most of Men are prone to treat God and Religion, as tho’ they esteemed them their greatest Foes: They desire to have little or nothing to do with them, they care not for their Company, but do all they can to keep themselves at a Distance from them. As for God, He is too holy, too precise for them, and seems to have an evil Eye upon them, and their Actions, they think: And Religion has something in it, which they fancy is too morose and severe, and lays too great Restraints upon them; they have an Antipathy to such a serious Melancholy (as they call it) as will not allow them their full Liberty of Mirth and Jollitry, the Indulgence of their irregular Pleasures, and the gratifying of their sensual Appetites: And therefore they desire not the Knowledge of God, or His Ways, and they say unto Religion, Depart from us. Look into the Lives of the most of Men, and even in the professing World, and see if their Conduct and Behaviour does not plainly speak all this; so that one would be ready to conclude from the sad Prospect of Vice and Profaneness, that however Men’s Tongues are tipt with the Name of God, and they are ready to embrue their Hands in Blood in the Defence of Religion; yet of all things there are no Two, which the World has a greater Aversion for.

But I beseech you be not deceived; ’tis not mentioning the Name of God, and quarrelling for Religion, that will engage them on our Side; but we must give ourselves up intirely to the Service of God; and believe, and practise according to all the Articles and Precepts of

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our Holy Bible ; that we may enjoy their Friendship, and be happy in their Favour. Let not then your grand Enemies any longer have your Ears and Eyes, and stir up an Aversion in you to your best Friends. Say not any longer, we are in Covenant with Death, and at an Agreement with Hell. Look but a little attentively, and you will see Sin, Satan, and the World, under all their beautiful Colours, carrying Poison and Death ; and God and Religion, under the harshest Representations, offering you a Victory over Death and Hell, a seraphick Peace and Tranquillity of Soul, and a never-fading Crown of Glory. Let not two such good Friends then be entertained by us, only as Strangers, whom we treat with more of State and Distance ; or merely out of Policy, that we may be thought as big as our Neighbours, for having the Appearance of two such noted Guests under our Roof, as have made such a mighty Noise in the World ; but let us heartily bid them a Welcome into the inmost Chambers of our Souls, and entertain them with all imaginable Respect and Reverence ; yet with the greatest Freedom and Chearfulness, unbosoming ourselves to them, and humbly seeking Counsel and Advice from them, that we may be directed wisely in our Warfare, and by their Assistance may gain the Palm.

Thus let this Doctrine serve to undeceive us, to discover to us who are really our Foes, and who are our hearty Friends ; and put us upon resolving, thro' divine Assistance, that as for the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, we will be avenged on these our Enemies ; we will arise, pursue, and destroy, until there shall be none left : But that as for God and Religion, we will from this time say it, as the Result of our sincere Choice, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is nothing on earth that I desire besides thee.*

2. Hence we may learn something of the *Glory of Christ*, and the *Honour of His sincere Followers*.

1. This may teach us something of the *Glory of Christ*. And there are Three Articles to be taken notice of in the

the Text and Doctrine that manifestly shew forth the Glory of Christ: *viz.* His sitting in His Father's Throne, His having a Throne of His own distinct from that of the Father's, and His overcoming. How does the Consideration hereof raise in our Minds the fullest Ideas of the superexcellent Glory of Jesus Christ?

While He was on Earth, He appeared in the Form of a Servant, in a poor, low, mean Condition, and therefore was despised and rejected of Men; but now that He is ascended, let us look up after Him into the Third Heaven, and there we shall see His Glories infinitely transcend the highest Honours which the greatest earthly Sovereigns can boast of, in their Descent from the most ancient Line of Nobles, and in the Riches and Extent of their Empires. For lo! He is GOD, very GOD, *over all, Blessed for ever.* Otherwise it would be impossible, that this more than created Honour should belong to Him, to sit with His Father in His Throne. For the Throne of the Father necessarily intends the supreme and the peculiar Honours and Glories of the Deity; and therefore it as necessarily follows, that none can be admitted to a Share in these Glories, or to sit in that Throne, but what must be equal to the Father in Power and Glory; or partake of the same Nature with the Father. Since the Father's Throne is the appropriated Glory of the eternal Deity, therefore none but God, or the eternal Deity, can partake thereof. For the Deity must cease to be (what all must grant He is) infinitely exalted above all, if an inferior Order of Being may be supposed to be equal to Him: Or, it must cease to be His Throne, and the high and peculiar Honours of the Deity, if any thing less than God Himself may be supposed to sit with Him in that Throne, or share in those Honours. For it is utterly impossible that a mere Creature, tho' never so exalted in its Make, should partake of the Glories of the Deity. Let us raise our Ideas never so high, in our Conception of One possessed of all the Excellencies, and in the highest Degrees, that are

compatible to a mere Creature ; and place such an One as much higher than the highest Angel, as that is superior to the meanest Worm ; still it will be but a Creature ; and after all, there will remain an infinite Distance between the Creator and that Creature. Add ever so many Millions of Cyphers together, and they will not all come up to a Unite ; nor will all the Finites in Nature, when blended together, make an Infinite, properly so called ; there will ever remain such a Distance between them, that the One cannot possibly be the Other. Since therefore Jesus Christ is possessed of the Throne of the Father (tho' not as Mediator, but with respect to some superior Excellency belonging to Him, who is the Mediator) it plainly demonstrates, that there is in Him such a Nature as is equal to the Eternal Father ; and therefore this high Honour and Dignity belongs to Him, that *He is the true God*, 1 John v. 20. Nor can this Passage of the Apostle, with any tolerable Grammar and Sense, be understood of any other than Jesus Christ the Son of God. For the Original runs, *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us a mind* (or Understanding) *that we may know the true one, and we are in the true one, in his Son Jesus Christ ; this is the true God, and eternal life.* Where the Apostle plainly tells us, whom he meant by (τὸν ἀληθινόν) *the True One*, namely, *His Son Jesus Christ* ; and it is evident, when he says, *This is the true God*, he cannot mean the Proposition or Doctrine he had asserted, but He must necessarily intend Him of whom he spake in the foregoing Clauses of the Verse, that is, the *True One*, or *Jesus Christ*, or *the Son of God*, by all of which he evidently means the same Being : *This* (says he) *is the true God and Eternal Life.* Nor can all the Art of Man rescue this Text out of our Hands, from being a plain Proof of the *True Deity* of Jesus Christ ; till they have first perverted the Meaning of Words, and overthrown the Connexion of Ideas, and so jumble all Language into unintelligible Gibberish.

Besides,

Besides, how highly glorified is the Man Jesus, united to the Son of God, for whom there is prepared a Throne, advanced far above all the Angels in Heaven; to whom is committed all Power in Heaven and Earth; who has Power over all Flesh, that He might give eternal Life to as many as the Father hath given to Him; who rules the Nations with a Rod of Iron, accomplishing His Pleasure for the Reduction of His Enemies, and the Gathering in of the Elect, which are His Body, the Fulness of Him who filleth all in all (a); to whom also is committed the Power of Judgment (b), and He shall appear at the last Day in His glorious high Throne, attended with a Retinue of holy Angels, summoning the whole World before his dread Tribunal, and passing Sentence according as Men's Works shall be: For God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world, by that man (Christ Jesus) whom he hath ordained, Acts xvii. 31.

What immortal Honours belong to Him as the most illustrious Conqueror? who hath triumphed over Sin and Satan, the World and Death; who hath girded Himself with Strength, and when He look'd and there was none to help Him, then His own Arm hath wrought Salvation, and by the Greatness of His Power He hath trodden down the Enemy under His Feet. What a radiant Crown shines around His Head, as the great Emperor? What a glorious State of endless and uninterrupted Peace and Joy, enriched with the Spoils of the Enemy, has He taken Possession of? How do the bright Seraphs surround Him with Transports of Admiration and Praise, and fill the heavenly Palace with their loud Hosannahs to the Son of David? And what Trembling and Astonishment will seize upon guilty Men and Devils, when they shall be forced to appear before Him,

to

(a) Eph. 1. 22, 23.

(b) John 5. 22.

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to receive their final Doom from the Mouth of this victorious Lord ?

Well then may we determine to know nothing, save Jesus Christ, and count all but Loss in Comparison of the Excellency of the Knowledge of Him. Well may we glory in having such an exalted Head and Leader, and look upon Him the chiefest among ten thousands, yea, altogether lovely. And while an unthinking World despise and reject a crucified Saviour, as Foolishness; or stumble at His Advancement to the Throne of God; we will glory in such a Mediator as is truly GOD, as well as truly MAN; yea, we will glory in the Cross of Christ, by which He has ascended to His Throne; by which also we are crucified to this World, and are entitled to sit with Him in Glory.

2. This teaches us something of the high *Honours which belong to all the sincere Followers* of Jesus Christ. Every true Christian, who is a sincere Follower of Jesus, is a glorious Conqueror. Tho' their bodily Strength may be but small, and their Constitution crazy, and they may be so far from heading well-disciplin'd Troops, as to be number'd among the lowest Orders of Men, and be confined to the meanest Cottages; yet have they a Strength and Vigour of Soul, peculiar to them, which renders them not only able to encounter, but finally to overcome the most puissant Enemies. And if we do but consider the Number and Strength of their Enemies, and what kind of Foes they are called to combat withal; it so much the more adds to the Lustre of their Honour, and renders their Name so much the more glorious in Renown, that ever they should be able to triumph over them. For they wrestle and contend, not with Flesh and Blood only, but with Principalities, and Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high Places; such mighty and powerful Enemies as easily subdue Multitudes, who are looked upon as the great and powerful among Men; such as lead Princes captive, and bind Monarchs as with Chains; yet even these mighty ones
fall

fall before the poorest and weakest sincere Follower of Jesus Christ.

Now, as Victory decorates the Brows of the Conqueror with the triumphant Laurel; and by how much the greater the Victory is, by so much the more is the Crown of Honour illustrious; as the Daughters of *Israel* sang to his immortal Honour, the Triumphs of *David* over slaughter'd *Goliath* and his Hosts, *David hath slain his ten thousands* (a); so the sincere Followers of Jesus, who overcame by the Blood of the Lamb, not the *Goliath* of *Gath*, but the *Goliath* of *Hell*, with all his vast extended Legions of Lusts, deserve an honourable Esteem in the World; as they have their Names recorded on high, and shall appear another Day, in white Robes, with Palms of Victory in their Hands (b).

And besides, they shall sit with Jesus in His Throne; it may be as Assistants in the Solemnities of the great Day of Trial, after that they have been first openly acknowledged and acquitted; which made the Apostle *Paul* say to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. vi. 2. *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?* however, in the utmost Exaltation of their Nature, in Purity, Fulness, and Satisfaction. So shall the highest Honours be done them before the whole World, each one shining bright with the Rays of their immortal Leader refulgent upon them, and resembling the Children of a King. What Honours, do we think, doth the Throne and Crown of earthly Princes confer upon them? But alas! what are their fading Crowns, their mouldering Thrones, compared with the incorruptible Crown, the everlasting Throne of un sullied Glory, that shall be possessed in the heavenly World by every true Christian.

Wherefore let not the poorest and meanest Follower of Jesus be despised by us; for truly the Wealth of the *Indies*, and the Dominion of Empires, Thrones of Saphire,

(a) 1 Sam. 18. 7.

(b) Rev. 7. 9.

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phire, and Crowns of Diamond alone; render no Man so truly honourable, as the Grace of Christ shining in the Hearts and Lives of His humble devout Followers. These are the excellent in the Earth, in whom therefore should be our Delight. And the Time is hastening, when the World shall be convinced, that it is *Virtue alone that enobles a Man*; that that is the Beauty and Glory of a rational Creature which adorns the Mind, is found within himself, and springs from the peculiar Gift of God, and is as lasting as his immortal Nature; and not that which a Man is beholden to Ancestors for, or the borrowed Plumes of another, which takes its Rise from Corruption, and sinks into Putrefaction: When the greatest Monarch upon Earth, if irreligious and profane, notwithstanding all his high swelling Titles, and gawdy Ensigns of Command, shall earnestly, but in vain, wish to be in the Condition of the poorest Peasant in his Kingdom, who religiously submitted to the regal Sceptre of Jesus; tho' here he was despised for his Poverty, and persecuted for Righteousness sake.

Use II. This Doctrine may be improved to administer Comfort to the true Christian. *Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably unto them, cry unto them, that their warfare is accomplished (a).* For every true Christian is and shall be a glorious Conqueror, and finally reap the Spoils, the Rewards of his Victory over all his Enemies. 'Tis true, the Christian is in a militant State while he is in the Body; and therefore no Wonder if he be put to Straits and Difficulties, to Watchings and hard Service, and to a resisting even unto Blood. But yet why shouldest thou be discouraged, O devout Soul? since thou hast so much Reason to hope in God, and there is such a sure Foundation for thy lasting Triumph and endless Praise. Does not the Victory evidently hang on thy Side already? Hast thou not many a time felt the Divine

(a) *Isaiah 40. 1, 2.*

divine Energy, enabling thee to overcome the Temptations of the wicked one? Dost thou not find by thy Aversion to Sin, and thy mourning over the least Advantage it gets of thee, that thou art in a State of Enmity with it? Does not thy Readiness to believe, and obey, all that Jesus Christ hath made known to thee, assure thee that thou art really lifted in His Service, and fighting under His Banner? And are not the Rewards of the Conqueror glorious? As these Thoughts should be a strong Excitement to a vigorous Prosecution of the War with thy spiritual Enemies; so should they also strengthen and support thy Heart under all the Difficulties thou mayest be exposed to in the Course of thy Warfare, and arm thee against the Terrors thou mayest meet with at the Conclusion of it. Thus,

I. This should comfort the true Christian under all the *Hardship he may meet with in the present Course of his Warfare.* Such he may expect to meet with, while as yet he is in the Field of Battle, and the Campaign is not over; but let the Hardship he is called to be never so great, here is Ground of Comfort to him. As now,

1. The Christians State in this World may be that of the *Poor and Low.* Thus we see it often is, thro' the promiscuous Distributions of divine Providence; the wicked grow rich and great, and flourish on every side, while the devout Christian is kept in a State of Poverty and Want, and may say with holy Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 2. *Even to this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling place.* The present Lot and Portion assigned to them, may be but a scanty Allowance, hard Fare, and short Commons; nor hath God any where absolutely promised that they should abound.

But supposing it should be thus, is not this enough to support and comfort thee under all? That there is a Throne prepared for thee, which e'er long thou shalt be brought to the full and peaceable Possession of. The hardy Soldier endures his long Marches, hard Lodging, and small Allowance, and all for the Sake of but a mean and pitiful Reward at the best; and comforts himself that e'er long

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Pay-day will come, and if he hold out the Campaign, or till the War is over, he shall have an Opportunity to return Home with Honour, and enjoy himself, and his Friends, with a little Pleasure. And should not you then be content with your present Portion, scanty as it is? seeing you have so great Rewards in your Eye, and are sure to return to your native Skies with Applause and endless Satisfactions. At best, the temporal Warrior can have but an earthly Crown and Throne in his View, but the spiritual Warrior has an heavenly Crown before him. The most glittering earthly Crown is corruptible, and may be lost; but the heavenly Crown is incorruptible, and can never be taken away: *They*, says the Apostle, *1 Cor. ix. 25. strive to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.* Since then thou holdest the Riches of Heaven in Reversion, and art as sure to come to the Throne, as that Jesus, thy Forerunner, is already sit down there, canst thou not be content and easy without the Possession of Earth too? As *John* the Baptist preached to the *Roman* Soldiers in his Day, *Luke iii. 14. Be content with your wages*; so may it be said to every true Soldier of Jesus Christ, Tho' your Portion should but mean and low in this World, yet be content and satisfied with it, as your present Allowance, in Prospect of the glorious Rewards, Christ will e'er long confer upon you. Hast thou not chosen Heaven for thy Home? and art thou not striving for the Throne above? wouldest thou now make an Exchange of the immense Treasures of that World, for the utmost Fulness you could enjoy in this? If thou wouldest not; then is it not plain, that what thou countest the Object of thy Choice, and the Foundation of thy true and lasting Happiness remains, tho' thou shouldest be very much emptied of the good Things of this Life: And is not this enough to comfort thee, that the one Thing needful is secure to thee, tho' thou art destitute of what thou needest not? *A man's life does not consist in the abundance of these Things*; an Affluence is not needful, nor does your Comfort depend thereon; nay, it may be it would be hurtful to you in your spiritual Warfare, to be entangled with
with

with a great Deal of this World's Goods; and therefore your compassionate Lord, who intends better Things for you, in infinite Wisdom, witholds the Riches of the Earth from you, that the Enjoyment of them might not draw away your Heart from the Truer, and more durable Riches of Heaven. How should it then support and comfort you, that all is ordered by Him, who knows what is best for you, who will not suffer you to want any Thing that is needful; and that within a little while God will raise the poor of His People, as from the Dunghil, and invest them with Beauty for Ashes, and set them on Thrones, with Princes of the People of the God of Israel. Thus said the Apostle *James*, Jam. ii. 5. *Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom; which he hath promised to them.*

2. Again; The true Christian may be exercised with various *Afflictions and Sorrows*, while he is in the World. For with Respect to the Vicissitudes and Changes, the Trials and Griefs of the present Life and World, *there is one event to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean, to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath; so that all Things come alike to all; as the Preacher tells us, Eccl. ix. 2.* The Fatigues and Burdens of the militant State are innumerable, and so are the Afflictions of the Righteous. Hence the Christian is told that *in this world, he shall have tribulation (a)*; and that *thro' manifold tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God (b)*; and we often see that *many are the afflictions of the righteous (c)*. It may be the Portion of one, like *Job*, to be stript of his Estate by the Tempest and the Robber; while another is mourning with *Jacob*, *Joseph* is not, *Simeon* is not, and ye will take *Benjamin* away; all these Things are against me. One groans under acute Pains, or languishing Diseases, which fill his Days

(a) *Job*. 16. 33.(b) *Act*. 14. 22.(c) *Psal*. 34. 19.

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Days with wearisomeness, and his Months with Vanity; and another may have Cause to complain, with *David*, of the Cursings of a *Shimei*, the cruel Mockings and Reproaches which almost break his Heart. How often do we hear one cry out of the Oppressions of an Enemy? who maliciously seeks Opportunities to hurt and wrong him; while another as bitterly laments the killing Unkindness and Treachery of a Friend, whom he has laid under all imaginable Obligations, and from whom therefore he might justly expect better Usage.

But be it so, O Christian, that thou art thus exercised with one or other, or all of these sore Tryals; yet is not here enough to comfort thee under all? that thou shalt in the Conclusion be victorious, and be honoured with the Presence and a Session in the Throne of Jesus. May the Servant expect to fare better than his Master? Has not Jesus suffered for thee, leaving thee an Example that thou shouldest tread in His Steps? What little Reason then hast thou to be dejected? or what Room is there for Impatience and Murmuring? seeing the Prize thou art striving for will infinitely more than make Amends for all the Sufferings thou meetest with in the Way to it. So did the holy Apostle comfort himself, and the believing *Romans*, *Rom. viii. 18.* *I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.* Thy Sufferings may be heavy, but the Crown will be far more weighty; thy Sufferings may be long in Time, but the Joys of the Throne will be infinitely longer, even of an eternal Duration; and thy very Afflictions born with a Christian Temperance and Fortitude of Soul, will but so much the more add to the Weight of thy Crown. For so we are assured, *2 Cor. iv. 17.* *Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Light, and short indeed, compared with the far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. As Jesus for the Joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame, and is set down at the Right-hand of the Throne of God; so should'st thou support and Comfort thy Mind,

Mind, under all the Crosses and Shame, thou mayest be exposed to, with the Thoughts of the Rivers of Pleasures, and Fulness of Glories, which everlastingly flow from the Throne, at the Right-hand of God, which thou art hastening unto.

And especially, if thou art called to suffer for righteousness Sake, in the Cause of God, and in bearing thy Testimony to the Name of Jesus; what an Addition will this make to thy Felicity in the heavenly World; *Blessed are ye*, said our Lord, *when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven*, Matth. v. 11, 12. If Men reproach you for your Preciseness, (as they scoffingly call it) and are ready to do all ill Offices to you, because you cannot fall in with their impious Manners; rejoice in such Sufferings, they do but make your Rewards in Heaven the greater. Or if you should be called to Bonds and Imprisonment, to Stripes and Scourging, to Confiscation and loss of your worldly Interest; or be denied the common Rights of Mankind, and the Liberties and Privileges of a good Subject, because you cannot go against the Light of your Conscience, and the Commands of Christ, in bowing the Knee to some Idol of humane Invention in the Worship of God, and submit to be governed in your religious Concernments by the Traditions of Men; what Cause have you for Thankfulness, rather than repining, that you are counted worthy to suffer? For what a manifest Token is it of the righteous Judgments of God, (of the Rectitude, Wisdom, and Goodness of all his Administrations) that while you act conscientiously, and not from Humour, in a close Adherence to the Dictates of your Conscience and the Word of God, in exposing your selves to such Hardships, you may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye suffer (a). For
this

(a) 2 Theff. 1. 5.

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this is thank worthy, if a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully; what glory is it, if when ye suffer for your faults, ye take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God: As the Apostle Peter tells us, *1 Pet. ii. 19, 20.* This is as true with Respect to the Subject, as the Servant. If thou thus suffer for Christ's Sake, and with the like Temper and Disposition of Mind, thou art but made so much the more conformable to Him; and therefore so much the more illustrious will the Honours be, which He will confer upon thee in the heavenly World. This was the Support of the suffering Apostle, and should in like Manner arm thee with Patience and Resignation under all; that thou mayest be able to say with him, *Act. xx. 23, 24.* *Bonds and afflictions abide me, but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy.*

3. Once more; The true Christian may be greatly burdened with *indwelling Corruption*. There is no Christian obtains so complete and perfect a Victory over Sin, while he is in this World, as to be entirely free from a Possibility of it's ever giving him any Disturbance. For after all, there are left in him some Remains of the vanquished Foe; and the repeated Sallies thereof from it's secret lurking Places, and it's dying Efforts, may greatly annoy and disturb the true Christian, and make him under the Pressure thereof to groan out with the Apostle *Paul, Rom. vii. 24.* *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.* He may find himself but weak and feeble, as having no Strength of his own; and his Soul may greatly be filled with Fear; Terror and Astonishment may take hold of him, till he say in his Heart as *David* in the Case of *Saul (a)*, *I shall perish one day by the Hand of Saul.* So the holy Soul sometimes fears *indwelling Corruption* will be too hard for him; and after all his fair Shew, and goodly Hopes, he is dreadfully apprehensive

(a) *1 Sam. 27. 1.*

apprehensive that Sin will one Day prove his utter Ruin. O! how does the Thoughts hereof deprefs his Spirits, cloud his Countenance, embitter his Delights, and bewilder his Steps, that he knows not which Way to turn himself? And as for the Comforter that should delight his Soul, he is ready to say of him, alas! he hath withdrawn himself, and is gone. How is his Soul bowed down greatly because of the Oppression of the Enemy? and his prevailing Fears give him no Rest Day nor Night; his Heart meditateth Terrors, and he sighs out with mournful Accents, *my way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God.*

Should such be thy pitiable Condition, O disconsolate Soul! yet remember the Years of the right Hand of the most High, and call to Mind His Wonders of old, and let the Consideration of what has been done for others, once as grievously oppressed as thou art, who are now reaping the Rewards of their Toil, in a glorious Triumph over this Enemy, afford Comfort to thee, enlighten thy Darkness, and rejoice thy Soul. Yea, look now within thy Self, and see if there is not sufficient Encouragement to be fetched from thy present Distress. Who is the Overcomer? and for whom is the Throne prepared? Is it not for him that has an Aversion to Sin, and maintains a Conflict with it? Who cannot bear the Thought of couching down under the Power of it? and dreads the falling a Prey before it? Well then, since thou findest Sin is thy Burden, and such a noble Scorn, and holy Indignation burns in thy Breast, as will not suffer thee to be easy under the Thought of being lead Captive by this ignominious Adversary, what is this? but a Token for good upon thee, that thou holdest it for thine Enemy. For 'tis evident, that the League of Friendship between thee and Sin, is broken; since if thou wert in a strict Alliance with it, it would not in this Way, give thee Pain and Sorrow. And because the Burdensomeness of Sin to thee, proves that thou art at Variance with it, and disputing the Mastery; does it not at the same Time, give thee Cause for rejoicing? as it proves,
that,

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that, (however a Fear of Caution may help thee in thy Contest, by making thee more watchful and active, yet) a Fear of Distrust and Despondency is to thee, unreasonably groundless; and but tends to abate the Edge of thy Vigour in thy spiritual Warfare.

Besides; tho' thou art but weak in thy self, and mayest look upon thy self but as a Grasshopper in the Hands of this mighty Giant; yet here is thy Comfort, that the Spirit and Grace of Christ is sufficient to enable thee to gain the Mastery: For strong is thy Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His Name; and He hath said, *Isa. xli. 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.* The Conquest over this Enemy is already begun, in thy Opposition to it; and he that first began this Work for thee, will carry it on unto its Perfection. Quicken then thy Diligence; but chastise thy oppressing Fears, and say with the Psalmist, *Psal. xlii. 11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* And I will add, who giveth us the Victory. Let not thy Fears hinder thee from the Performance of any Duty, but only drive thee the oftener upon thy Knees, to beg Help from God; and make thee more circumspect, and laborious thro' the Remainder of thy Warfare; and know assuredly thou shalt overcome, and win the Prize. But then;

2. This Doctrine affords Comfort to the true Christian under, and against the Terrors he shall be called to encounter withal, at the End of his Warfare. As the Christian draws to the Conclusion of his Warfare, the King of Terrors stands ready to lay his Arrest upon him; and we may not think to escape falling into his Hands, for *there is no Discharge in this War, Eccl. viii. 8.* No Christian has an Exemption, or can plead a *Quietus*, by which he is excused from Death, the common Lot of all Men. And when this last Enemy appears, Nature shrinks back and is affrighted at the ghastly Spectacle. For the Soul has contracted

contracted a Fondness for its present Tabernacle, in which it has so long amicably dwelt; and having made all her Improvements, natural, moral and divine, while she has resided here; and being very much a Stranger to the Mansion where she is bound, she is loth to turn out, and leave her present Habitation. The Instruments of Death have something in them very shocking to our Minds; 'tis an unknown Path we are to tread; and it is dark all around; this makes the Image of Death frightful, and we start at the Approach of it.

But why, O serious Christian, should such a Man as thou be afraid? Shall the Name terrifie thee, when thou shalt vanquish the Person of the Enemy? Wilt thou startle at the Shadow, when thou knowest the Substance can do thee no Hurt? Is not here enough to arm thee against the Fears of Death, and divest it of its Terrors? Is it not made over to thee in the Covenant, as part of thy Portion, or at least, leading to it, and designed for your Advantage? *Death is yours*, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 22. 'Tis your Friend, your Privilege, your Passage to Heaven, says Mr. Flavel. It will be so far from hurting thee, as to put a final End to thy militant State, and begin thy Triumphant. Look over thy Comforts then, and encourage and strengthen thy Soul.

Dost thou tremble at the Harbingers of Death? at Sickness and Pain, and at the dissolving of the vital Tie? Surely these are too mean an Adversary to be greatly feared merely upon their Account. But supposing these to carry some Terror in their Countenance; where is thy Faith and Hope in the immortal Joys, which lye beyond Death and the Grave? Is thy Strength so small, as that thou canst not bear this Burden a little Way, in the good Hope of arriving quickly where thou shalt have everlasting Rest? Cheer up thy Soul; this is the last Enemy; when thou hast stood the Encounter with this, thou shalt never be called to another Tryal. After this thou shalt never meet with any affliction to disturb thee, no Sin to grieve thee, nor any Devil to persecute thee, nor any Death to hurt thee. But, as *Moses* said to the

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surprised *Israelites*, when *Pharaoh* and his Host were close upon his Heels, *Exod. xiv. 13. Fear ye not, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever*: So also thy spiritual Enemies which now so closely beset thee, after the Day of thy Death, thou shalt see them again no more for ever. And wilt thou then be afraid of what gives thee such a happy Deliverance from their Reach and Power?

What hast thou to fear beyond the Grave? Dost thou tremble at the Thoughts that thou hast been guilty, and must appear before thy Judge? Is this the Sting, that threatens thee with a mortal Wound? Be not dismayed. Tho' the Devil would now lay all thy Crimes to thy Charge, and shake the terrible Point against thee; yet his Accusation is false, and his Thrust shall pass by thee. Thou hast believed in Jesus, who has dyed for thy Offences, and risen again for thy Justification, and so all thine Iniquities are forgiven, and no Guilt is imputable to thee, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that dyed, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (a)*; and thro' Christ assisting thee, thou hast mortified thy Lusts and carnal Appetites; and shall any of these reign in thy pure unbodied Spirit, when they reigned not in thy mortal Body? Why then shouldest thou be afraid to appear before thy Judge? when thou needest not doubt of His Friendship, who never was an Enemy to any, but those who suffered Sin to have the Dominion over them. Thou hast already triumphed over Death in Effigie, and by thy Faith and Virtue, hast disarmed it of its Sting; and, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ (b)*, thou shalt assuredly conquer it in Reality.

Tho' thy Soul is to pass thro' the Territories of the Prince of the Power of this Air, in its Ascent to the
Mansions

(a) *Rom. 8. 33, 34.*

(b) *1 Cor. 15. 57.*

Mansions of eternal Light and Joy, yet none of the fallen Sons of the Morning shall be able to stop thee in thy Course, or give any real Disturbance to thee, as thou soarest thro' the wide Ether. For a Guard of holy and mighty Angels shall take thee under their Convoy, as they did the departed Spirit of *Lazarus* (a), and conduct thee safe to thy Father's House. So *Elijah* ascended under the Guardianship of Angels, in the Appearance of a Chariot and Horses of Fire (b); a safe and an honourable Defence.

Nor shall thy Body always lie rotting in the cold Grave; but anon the Return of the Son of Righteousness, in greater Glory, and more powerful Influences, shall bring on a new Spring; when thy Body shall revive, and be freed from all the disadvantageous Circumstances of Weakness, Dishonour, and Corruption, and shall put on spirituality and Power, Incorruptibility and Glory, and flourish with an everlasting Verdure: So shall it renew it's Youth, as it mounts up as with Eagles Wings, and the never fading Bloom thereof eternally shine in the utmost Fulness upon it. For *them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him; the dead in Christ shall first rise, -- and then be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.* 1 Thess. iv. 14, 16, 17.

Add to all this, the Consideration of the glorious Rewards, Death passes thee over to the Possession of. Then shalt thou be with Christ, and sit with Him in His Throne. Then in thy Flesh shalt thou see God, and beholding of Him in His Glory, be changed more and more into the same Image, from one Degree of Glory to another. Then shall thy defacated Soul and Body join with the Saints and Angels, which compose the happy Choir above, in those pure and spiritual Services, and satisfactory Enjoyments, which make up the perfect and endless Harmony of the heavenly World. This Happiness thou canst not enjoy, while thou art in the Body,
attended

(a) Luke 16. 22.

(b) 2 Kings 2. 11.

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attended with it's present Weaknesses and Infirmities ; *for corruption cannot inherit incorruption (a)* : But so soon as Death wafts thee over into the State which lyes beyond the Grave, then the beatifick Vision will open plain before thee, and thou shalt have a full View of the Glories of it, and thou wilt enter upon the Possession of that supreme Felicity, which now thou hopest for, and rejoicest in the distant Prospect of. How then *should'st thou chuse rather to be absent from the body, that thou mayest be present with the Lord.*

See the gallant Hero, how for the Sake of Honour and Applause, and to leave a Name behind him, he fearless stands the Enemies Fire, and dreads not to march up to the Mouth of the Cannon ; he leaps the Ditch, and scales the Walls, and rushes on to inevitable Death. And shall not the immortal Honour of Sitting in the Throne with Jesus, a seeing of Him as He is, and a being like Him, and that for ever ; shall not this support thy Mind under the Apprehensions of Death, scatter all thy Fears, and reconcile thee to dying ? Is it not a Sight worth dying for, to see Jesus in all His Glory ? Who would not wade thro' the black Sea, to partake of the ineffable and everlasting Glories of His immediate Presence, which lie on the other Side the Grave ?

Well then, let the Thoughts hereof comfort, encourage thee, O Christian, to the last Conflict with the King of Terrors ; and deliver thee from that Bondage which thou art subject to thro' the Fear of Death. Let this put thee upon a patient waiting for, and a longing Expectation of the happy Time, when the Dissolution of thy Body shall be the Confirmation of thy Soul in immortal Joys ; when for thee to bow thy self and fall, shall be but to crush all thy Enemies under thee ; and to yield up thy Ghost shall but usher in thy Triumph. O ! with what Calmness and Composure of Mind mayest thou now take a View of all the hideous Forms, in which Death

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(a) 1 Cor. 15. 50.

is wont to appear, and look the Enemy in the Face with an exulting Smile? and the nearer he approaches thee, so much the more devoutly rejoice in the View of the Accomplishment of thy fervent Desires, to put off thy earthly Tabernacle, those mean and perishing Robes, that thou mayest be invested with Garments of Splendor, glorious and unfading? Let him that has conscious Guilt unpardoned sitting heavy upon him, shrink and tremble at the Thoughts of his Soul's being driven away in it's Wickedness; but surely it becomes thee, O holy Soul, who hast placed thy trust in Jesus, and endeavoured a Life conformable to His, to evidence thy Hope in thy Death, by an humble and quiet Resignation to the high Command, to go up the Mount and die. "O How secure art thou, in the Purity of thy Conscience? O happy Life! where Death is so far from being feared in the Prospect of it, that it is wished for with Pleasure, and submitted to with a chearful Resignation" *.

Thus the Doctrine of the Overcomer's sitting with Christ in His Throne, speaks abundant Consolation to every true Christian.

Use. 3. This Doctrine may be improved to administer severe *Reproof and Admonition* to all such as are not Christians in Truth and Reality. Many there are which pass the Muster among Christians; they assume the Name, Stile, and Title; they appear visibly under the Colours, and seem to have on the Livery of Jesus Christ; who yet are far from being His Soldiers, and fighting under His Banner; but instead thereof, they are in League with His Enemies, and wage an impious War with Heaven, and against the only Son of God. And are such to be spoken comfortably to, and their vain Hopes of the glorious Rewards of the Throne above, to be encouraged? No surely: Unto such it belongs to have the Terrors of the Lord

* *O Vita segura! ubi pura Conscientia: O Vita segura! ubi absque Formidine Mors expectatur, imo et expectatur cum Dulcedine, et excipitur cum Devotione.* Bern. ad mil. Temp. p. 109

Lord set as in Battle array against them; that if possible they may, from a distant Prospect of their Danger, shake off their Security, and awake to Righteousness; that they may haste to agree with their Adversary, while as yet they are in the Way, lest he meet them in his Wrath, and give forth his irrecoverable Order for their Execution. How amazing is it to see so many live in sensual Pleasures, spending their Days in Carousing and Debauchery, in Prophanity and Worldly-mindedness, who yet flatter themselves with the delusive Hopes, that they shall have a share in the Spoils of the Victory? and doubt not but that they shall go to Heaven when they die, as well as their precise Neighbours, whose squeamish Stomachs, or melancholly Tempers (as they think) will not suffer them to go their Lengths. But lay thy Hand upon thy Heart; and suffer thy Conscience for once to speak freely and plainly. Thou that livest in Drunkenness and Unchastity; is this to be like the pure and holy Jesus? or like the impure and unclean Devil? Thou that allowest thy Self in Cursing and Swearing; is this the Language of Heaven? or the Dialect of Hell? Thou that art full of Malice and Wrath, and Hatred against thy Brother; is this the Temper of the happy peaceable Spirits above? or the true Disposition of infernal Spirits? Thou that prophanest the Lord's Day; is this most agreeable to that Rest remaining for the People of God? or to the perpetual Hurry of that Place, where they rest not Day nor Night? Thou that canst not bear to be tied up to the Duties of Religion in thy Closet, in thy Family, and in the House of God; does this look like accounting it thy Happiness to be for ever with the Lord? or rather a placing thy Contentment in keeping at a Distance from Him? What grounds then hast thou to think, that thou shalt be owned as a Follower of Jesus, when thy Walk is so unlike His Example, and so contrary to His Commands? Oh! Thou hast been christened (thou sayest) and what? will not Christ own thee, when thou hast had His Mark put upon thee? But say now; will a being dipped or plunged into clean Water, or sprinkled or signed with it, indeed make thee a Christian?

Is this all that is requisite to make thee a Christian? Or, will Baptism, (tho' an Institution of Jesus Christ, which ought to be observed by all His Disciples; yet will this) save thee without the Answer of a good Conscience towards God (a)? As well may Turks and Pagans hope to sit with Christ in His Throne as thou: Thy Heart is as theirs, thy Life is as theirs, if not worse; and why should not your End be the same? No (thou sayest) Christ has died for all that believe on Him, and thou believest on Him; and therefore thou hopest for a Share in that future Blessedness which He hath purchased. That Christ has died for Sinners is a comfortable Truth: But what did he die for? was it not to *redeem them from iniquity, and purify them to Himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works* (b)? And will He then save any in their Sins? any that are not, and will not be purified, but still hug their Lusts and will not let them go? What dost thou believe more than the Devils themselves do? *They believe there is a God* (c); yea, they believe, and know that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God* (d). And what Influence has thy belief upon thee, more than theirs has? Does thy Faith evidence it self to be genuine, by thy supremest Affection to thy Maker, and a sincere Love to thy fellow Creatures? Dost thou in any tolerable Measure of Sincerity, and with any suitable Efficacy of it upon thy Mind, believe that *no unrighteous person, no fornicator, no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God* (e)? would'st thou live as thou dost, if thou didst truly believe this?

Well then; why will you delude your self, in an Affair of such infinite Concernment, with the vain Hopes of Happiness, thro' Christ in another World? when your own Conscience, if you would but a little seriously attend unto her Dictates, will plainly tell you, that they are ill grounded, and are by no means to be trusted to. And sure I am, that there is nothing in all the Book of God, that

(a) 1 Pet. 3. 21. (b) Tit. 2. 14. (c) Jam. 2. 19.
(d) Matth. 8. 29. (e) 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

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that looks any thing favourably upon you, until you alter the present Course of Life, and live more like a Christian than you have hitherto done: But innumerable are the pointed Arrows of the Almighty that are levelled against thee, and truly amazing the hot Wrath that hangs over thy Head ready to break down upon thee. And particularly this glorious Truth, of the Saints Victory and Rewards, looks with a terrible Aspect upon thee. For,

1. Instead of being victorious, thou art but a *captived Slave*. The true Christian only is the Overcomer; he 'tis that subdues his Lusts, mortifies his Passions, is dead to the World, and resists the Devil. He therefore that is no more than a Nominal Christian; that has no more to shew for his Christianity, than that he has been baptised, attends upon the outward Modes of Worship, and is called a Christian among his Neighbours; he has no share in the Victory, nor any Right to the Rewards. And because he does not overcome his spiritual Enemies, 'tis certain, how big soever his looks may be, and his Train splendid, he is but all the while lead Captive by his Adversaries, and as a Slave grinding at their Mill. This is his sad Condition to *be taken captive by the devil at his will*, 2 Tim. ii. 26. And not only is he in Captivity to Satan; but the World and Lusts lead him about, as in Chains, to grace their Triumphs over a reasonable Creature. For what is a worldly-minded Man? but * a Soul transformed into Earth, or the Products of it: And surely this is a Subjection and Bondage with a Witness. He may please himself with the Fancy, that he is under no Restraints, but scorns to submit to a Yoke; that he is more of a Libertine than to be tied up to strict Rules; but will live and act as his carnal Pleasures, or his worldly Interest leads him. And yet after all; this is no better, than to confess himself an Out-law, who has no Right to the Privileges of the Citizens of Zion? and under the Pretence of Liberty, manifestly to own himself a Servant of Corruption

* *Amor transfert amantem in Rem amatam.*

ruption in the worst of Bonds and Slavery? For this is the Apostle's Account of them, 2 Pet. ii. 19. *While they promise liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in Bondage.* Hence you find such false Pretenders to Religion and Liberty, either openly drudging in the Service of some vile Lust, or more secretly subjecting themselves to the magisterial Sway of some corrupt Affection. How often do we see them easily overcome by every assault from Temptations? and they have not Strength enough of Mind left them, to resist the Enticements of a vain Companion, calling upon them to follow him, tho' it be to Correction and Death. How easily does the World hold them in it's Snares? while the Prospect of Gain, puts them upon neglecting God, and their Souls, and doing Injury to their Neighbour. So are they sold under Sin, which reigns in their mortal Bodies, even unto Death. Hence said the Apostle, Rom. vi. 16. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yeild your selves Servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* Say now, after all thy Boasts of Liberty; what does thy Claim of Manumission amount to? If thou art not the Lord's freed-Man, a Conqueror over Sin, and a Servant of Righteousness; what art thou, but a Captive of Satan, a Servant to diverse Lusts, and a Bond-Slave of Hell? Thou gloriest in the mean Liberties of the brutal Part which chuses according to it's Inclination; while thou dost Violence to thy Reason, and basely subjectest thy intellectual Man to the Dominion of the worst of Tyrants. And is this a fitting and delectable State for a rational and immortal Creature? Infinitely more reasonably is it for a Sovereign to glory in his Chains, than his Dog goes at large.

2. And can such an one rationally expect to *be with Jesus* in the heavenly World? No certainly. For tho' thou mayest have called Him Lord and Master; yet it is evident, that thou never wast in Reality His Servant;

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in that thou hast not done the Things that He hath commanded thee. 'Tis the Overcomer that shall sit with Him; but thou hast been always and easily overcome. And because thy Lusts have had the Mastery over thee, therefore thou art not fit to appear in the Presence of so holy a Lord. Shall the Thrones of Iniquity have Fellowship with Thee? No; no more than Darknes can have with Light. If it were possible for thy Soul to ascend locally to Heaven, with all thy Guilt and Pollutions about thee, it would be no Heaven to thee. The Inhabitants of that World talk a pure Language, which thou understandest not; and they are perpetually employed in such religious Services, as thy Soul has an Aversion to. What a Misery wou'd it be to thee to be for ever confined to such Company; among whom thou couldst not do thy own Work, speak thy own Words, nor think thy own Thoughts? The Looks of their Countenance would astonish thee; and the Lustre of their Holiness would be to thee as hot Lightening, that would scorch thy Soul within thee. Thou hast that about thee that would turn Heaven into Hell to thee; and therefore it is utterly impossible that thy enslaved Soul should ever subsist in the bright Presence of the Victorious Redeemer. No; He will say to thee, notwithstanding all thy formal Profession, Depart from me. Thus He assures thee, *Math. vii. 21, 22, 23. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven: many will say to me, in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works: and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work Iniquity.*

Thou shalt never know what it is to see Jesus in his Glory, otherwise than as thy incensed Judge; nor shall one Beam of the Light of His Countenance ever irradiate and comfort thee: But thou shalt be banished for

for ever from His glorious Presence ; and instead of being admitted where He is, to behold His Glory, be confined to the hideous Company of Devils and damned Spirits. For this will at last be the inevitable Doom of those that will not that Christ should now reign over them, but choose rather to be in Subjection to their own Lusts, *Matth. xxv. 41. Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Those apostate Spirits that have been thy Familiars in this World, by whom thou hast been instigated, and acted, in all thy treasonable Rebellions against the Lord of Glory, will be thy dreadful Companions in the World to come, throughout eternal Ages. And what more just, than that thou shouldest be punished, by being for ever associated with those infernal Furies, whom thou practically mad'st Choice of while here ? and that thou shouldst be also a Partaker in their Plagues ?

3. Nor shalt thou have any Right to *sit with Jesus in His Throne.* For shall such an one have any Part in the Honours and Triumphs of that Day, who has not been a partaker in the Victory ? no verily, neither the Honours, nor the Fulness, the Serenity, nor the Pleasures of the Throne do any Ways belong to him, who has chose to yield himself up to the Government of the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, rather than be at any Pains to maintain a holy Combat with them. Thou therefore that hast lived all thy Days in the Service of some Lust or other, shalt at last have assigned to thee thy Portion of Dishonour ; and Shame and everlasting Contempt shall be poured upon thee (a). The holy Angels will look down with Scorn and Indignation at thee (for there will be no Room for Pity then,) for thy unaccountable Folly and Stupidity, in preferring the Service of Satan, that vile Usurper, before that of their high and rightful Sovereign ; and grinning Devils will shout out the Lip, and flout, and deride thee, that

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(a) *Dan. 12. 2.*

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thou madeſt no better an Improvement of thy Underſtanding and Opportunities, than to fight againſt the Lord, and His anointed; whom they have found by ſad Experience, to be an Overmatch for them. Oh! how wilt thou be able to hold up thy guilty Head? or bear the Reflections of thy own Mind, without ſinking into Confuſion? Inſtead of the Throne, a Bed of Torment ſhall be prepared for thee; and inſtead of Joy and Pleaſure, unutterable and endleſs Horror and Anguiſh ſhall ſeize upon thee. For this will be the unavoidable Portion of all them that ſet themſelves in Oppoſition to Jeſus Chriſt; He will ſay concerning them, *Luke xix. 27. Thoſe mine enemies which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay them before me.* Prodigious Deſtruction! which all ſuch as have not been victorious over their ſpiritual Enemies, ſhall, as Enemies to Jeſus Chriſt, be devoted unto.

Think not to hold thy ſelf excuſed, becauſe thou haſt never ſeen Jeſus Chriſt, nor ever did any Thing againſt His Perſon. For thou haſt ſeen His Laws, and the evident Characters of His royal Authority ſtamped upon them; and theſe thou haſt wilfully contemned and broken. And tho' thou haſt not perſecuted Him in Perſon; yet thou haſt done it (it may be) in His Members; theſe thou haſt hated, maligned, reproached, ſcourged, and ſlain. And what think you, will he ſay to you, in the Day when thou ſtandeſt trembling under thy Arraignment, before His tremendous high Throne? will it be a valid Plea, a reaſonable Abatement, that you did not like their Manners? or that you thought it more becoming, that they ſhould univerſally conform themſelves to your Dictates, rather than what they underſtood to be the Mind of the Lord? Verily; this will be the very Ground of His Diſpleaſure; and therefore will he ſay to you, inasmuch as ye did ſo and ſo perſecute theſe, ye perſecuted Me (a).

And

And tho' thou mayest now make Light of it, that thou dost oppose Jesus Christ, and the Advancement of His Kingdom and Interest in the World; yet know assuredly it will be such a Load of Guilt upon thee in the Day of Recompence, as will pull down a Weight of Vengeance upon thy Head, such as thou shalt not be able to bear. For in vain will you think to harden your self against Him, and prosper. Canst thou wrest the Sceptre out of His Hands? As easily mayest thou pull thy Maker out of His Throne. And can thy Hands be strong, or thy Heart endure, in the Day when He shall enter into Judgment with thee, for all thy Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness? In the Day when He shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not His Gospel, wilt thou then be able to hide thy self from His piercing Eye? or will thy State and Grandeur in the World protect thee from the dismal Sentence? No such Matter: For then *shall the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, (as well as the more common People,) every bondman, and every freeman, hide themselves (tho' in vain,) in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand,* Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17.

Well then, let Sinners in Sion be afraid, and Fearfulness surprise the Hypocrite. Flatter not thy self with an empty Profession of Religion; nor be at any Rest so long as thou findest any one Sin has as yet the Dominion over thee. As ever thou wouldest not be found among the Enemies of Jesus, for when Tophet is ordained of old, now take the Warning that has been given thee; and put off the old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts, and maintain an irreconcilable Enmity and perpetual War against every false Way.

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Way. *Oh! that thou wouldst be wise, that thou didst understand this, that thou wouldst consider thy latter End.*

Use. 4. The last Use is of *Exhortation*. Let us all then be persuaded to *maintain a vigorous Conflict with our spiritual Enemies*, that with Overcomers, we may share in the Rewards of sitting with Jesus in His Throne. Is there any Thing of greater Importance and Concernment to us than this is? Can we in any other Way better advance our Honour, secure our Interest, and act up to the Dignity of our rational Natures? Well then; let us enter the List among the sincere Followers of Jesus; let us give up, not only our Names, but our Hearts to Him; yea, all that we have, and are, and can do: And having sworn Allegiance to Him, let us not put a Cheat upon our selves, and play false with Him; let us not basely betray His Cause, cowardly yield up our selves to His Enemies, nor vilely desert His Service and turn Apostates; but let us behave our selves like Men; honestly engage in the Contest all His and our Enemies, wax valiant in the fight, and give not over, till thro' Grace assisting, we have put to Flight all the Armies of these Aliens. And therefore consider,

I. Art thou not under *baptismal Obligations* hereunto? The most, if not all of us have been baptised into the Lord Jesus. And what is the meaning of this Christian Rite? but a publick professed Declaration of our being the Soldiers of Jesus Christ; and that as such we will renounce, withstand and oppose, and hold no illegal Confederacy with the Flesh, the World, and the Devil. Is not our Baptism a publick Owning of Christ as our only Head, to give Law to our Faith and Practice? and our professed Subjection to His Gospel, as our only and sufficient Rule to direct us in the Observation of all religious Duties, and moral Virtues? and that our only Hope of the Happiness and Glory of the Resurrection, and heavenly World, is founded in Him?

Well

Well then ; ought we not to live up to our baptismal Engagements ? Should we not look upon all the Enemies of Christ, as our Enemies ? Should we not hate the Things which He hates, and oppose all that stand in Opposition to His Kingdom and Interest ? And should not His Laws be the Rule of our Walk, His Word our Directory, and His Commands sacred with us ? 'Tis a melancholy Reflection of a late Moral Writer (whom I have before quoted *,) which I think well worth transcribing : “ It is too plain (says he) from Observation of men and Manners, that “ Multitudes who have enter'd into the baptismal Vow, “ weigh 'it as little when they should perform it, as “ they did when they made it : They seem to have “ no other Notion of Baptism, but as a Custom of the “ Place, or a Time of Feasting ; and consider no “ farther Significancy in those spiritual Bonds, than “ they did in their Swadling-clothes ; nor can give “ any better Account, why they took on them Christ's “ Livery, than why they wear such Garments, as the “ common Fashion of the Country prescribes them.

Good God ! Is this to be called by Thy Name ? What do such Persons make of Christianity ? Is the most pompous Observation of a Fashion, attended with all the Revellings of a *Bacchus*, a fit Offering to the Divine Majesty ? or the grand Characteristick of a Holy Jesus ? Be astonished, O Heavens ! Or suppose our Baptism to be accompanied with more of Decency, and true Devotion in those that bring us to the sacred Font : Yet are we faithful to Christ, and our Engagements, while we take no Care to live answerable to the Vow of God which is brought upon us ? Or may we reasonably hope that Christ will own us another Day, receive and enthrone us, if we are false to Him ?

Nay,

* *Gent. Libr.* p. 276.

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Nay, if we hug our Lusts, court the World, and hearken to the Temptations of the Devil ; if we wilfully persist in the Neglect of any one known Duty, or in the Commission of any one Thing that is forbidden to us, are we not then perfidious ? Do we not then violate our Faith, the Oath, and the Bond of God, which is upon us ? And is the Oath of God indeed of so small account with thee ? *Better is it that thou shouldest not vow (unto the Lord) than that thou shouldest vow, and not pay.* Eccl. v. 5. For this Perfidiousness greatly inhances thy Guilt, and will procure a more aggravated Condemnation. The vanquished Enemy may expect a less severe Punishment than the perjured Defenter.

2. Let the *Glories that await* the Conqueror, raise thy Ambition. What is it thou art called to contend for ? Is it not Glory, Honour, Immortality, and Eternal Life ? For nothing less can be intended in a Sitting with Jesus in His Throne. And is not this worth thy striving for ? Supposing then, that it be a Matter of great Difficulty to overcome thy spiritual Enemies ; say, it calls for close Thought, warm Action, daily Hardships, and continual Watchings ; yet is not here enough to over-balance all ? Will not the inward Peace and Tranquillity of thy Mind be a sufficient Recompence, if there were no more, for all thy Struggle in the mortifying of thy Lusts and Passions ? These are the Worms bred within thee, that gnaw and fret thy Vitals ; that make thee sore, and every thing that touches thee a Burden : If thou canst but mortify these, how calm will thy Life be ? and what can disturb thee ? What a noble Victory will this be, to be Master of thy self ? and to be out of the Reach of any thing's hurting thee ? And hast thou no Ambition to be thy own Man ? But how amazingly great are the future Glories laid up in Heaven for the Conqueror ? Will not the Triumph abundantly make amends for the Toils of the War ? Do but consider

consider thy self as a reasonable or an immortal Creature, and see, whether the Wages are not more than equal to the Difficulties of the Labour?

Besides; is there any thing equal to this, which thou canst propose to thy self, to obtain in the Service of Sin? Is not the Sinner put to as hard Labour to gratify his Lusts, as the Christian is to comply with his virtuous Disposition? Is not his Heart equally burdened with the Contrivance of his wicked Purposes, and his Hands with the executing of them; as the good Man's are in his different Thoughts and Pains for a Religious Life? What then does the wicked Man get by his preferring the Service of Sin, to the Service of Christ? Why, at the most he gains but an ill-grounded; short-liv'd Pleasure, of the lowest kind, and which ends in Bitterness and Death. While the conscientious Christian enjoys a superior Pleasure, more solid and lasting, and is Heir to Eternal Life. Well then, is it not most reasonable, that if thou must be inured to Hardships, to choose to undergo those that will issue so advantageously for thee, as to bring thee to the Possession of the Throne of Glory, rather than those that will end in Destruction and Misery! Let these Considerations have their due Force upon our Minds, stir up our Ambition, and determine us in our Resolutions for the Service of Christ, and the Enjoyment of Heaven.

And that we may make good our Resolutions, and finally overcome all the Enemies that lie in our Way, let us hearken to these Counsels.

1. Let us be *temperate* in all things. There is nothing more exposes us to the Insult of the Enemy, than Intemperance; whether we consider it, as it respects the inward Lustings of the Mind, or the outward Cravings of the Body; because this is to put our selves over into their Power, and make them our absolute Masters: And therefore in order to our overcoming of them, this Virtue is peculiarly necessary.

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Temperance

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Temperance then is requisite for the due Government of the Lustings of the Mind. For no where do the Adversaries get greater Advantages over us, than by improving against us the Vehemence of our own Desires; because while these are left to range with an unbridled Liberty, 'tis an easy Matter so to manage the near Alliance of sensible Objects to us, as with Whip and Spur, to precipitate us beyond the Bounds of our Duty, and to the doing of those things which are not convenient. The best Way to prevent the Snares which an evil Heart and a busy Devil lay for us in worldly Objects, is to be moderate in our Apperites after them. Hence is that Apostolical Direction, *Phil iv. 5, 7. Let your moderation be known unto all men; — and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, thro' Christ Jesus.* They that are not moderate in their Desires, have little Reason to expect that the Peace of God should rule in their Hearts. For God and the World have nothing common; and therefore cannot dwell together. Till earth'y Things are in some measure insipid to us, we shall have no true Gust and Relish for spiritual and heavenly ones. He that would preserve himself, when he is greatly endangered by a Storm, must be content to lighten his Vessel, and throw the Lumber overboard. So much the less our Desires are enlarged after the World, so much the more will the Peace of God keep our Hearts. “ Nature forbids thee to fix one Eye upon the Heavens
“ over thee, and the other upon the Earth under thee;
“ and Reason and Religion render it as impossible
“ for thee to be filled with Divine Consolations, who
“ art already full of the Creature, says *Stella* *.” As the World hateth the Disciples of Jesus, so they that love the World cannot expect that He will own and honour them with a Session with Him.

To

* *De Cont. Mun.* p. 8.

To this End also must we be temperate in the Use of the Creatures ; and so moderate the Cravings of our outward Man. The Apostle therefore tells us, *1 Cor. ix. 25. Every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things.* Temperance in the Use of the Creatures of God is a good Means to preserve the Health and Vigour of the Body ; but much more does it confirm the Soul athletick and healthy. For Intemperance in the Use of the Creature naturally tends to cloud the Understanding, and weakens the Resolutions of the Soul, in which lies its Strength and Vigour. He therefore that hopes to win the Crown and sit upon the Throne, must disentangle himself as much as possibly he can from all such immoderate Desires and luscious Improvements of the World and the Things of it, as would give his Enemy the Advantage over him. *For no man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life ; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 2 Tim. ii. 4.*

2. *Improve our spiritual Armour* to the best Advantage. We are told, *2 Cor. x. 4. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, thro' God, to the pulling down of strong holds.* He that goes to War must be armed for the Battle, and needs skilfully to improve his Weapons that he may conquer his Enemy. And so the Christian must take Care that he have on the whole Armour of God ; and he must improve his Armour to the best Purposes, and with his greatest Skill ; that he may pull down the strong Holds of inbred Lusts, and ward off surrounding Temptations. We are directed both to the Weapons, and the Use of them, in *Eph. vi. 13, ---- 18.* and if these be wisely and skilfully managed by us, we may hope to come off Conquerors.

Especially must we take heed to a due Improvement of the Word of God, that Sword of the Spirit, which is so peculiarly serviceable both to defend our selves, and beat down our Enemies. This gives us

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the Rules of our Conduct, which is as the Law of Arms, and the Rules of War to us; and if this be not well observed by us, we shall too easily fall into the Ambushments of the Adversary, and provoke the Displeasure of our high Commander. Nor may we suppose that we can possibly win the Prize, unless we observe the Laws of our Master. For as the Apostle says, *2 Tim. ii. 5. If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* Methods that are purely our own Invention are little likely to be helpful to us, in gaining the Mastery; because we go off from the wise Directions of our consummate General, to follow our own giddy Fancies, which will lay us open to the Enemy's Battery*; and if it were possible that they should, yet the Mastery gained in such an unlawful Way, would forfeit the Crown.

3. Lastly; We must have our *intire Reliance upon Jesus Christ alone*, both to grant us the Victory, and bestow the Rewards upon us. He is the great Captain of our Salvation, without whose Direction and Assistance we shall be no Ways a Match, for so many and powerful Enemies, as we are called to encounter withal. If the Lord do not help us, whence shall our Help arise? We have no Might nor Strength of our own to go forth against so great a Company. Hence Christ told His Disciples, *John xv. 5. Without me ye can do nothing.* He has gone before us, and led Captivity captive, in His complete Victory; and to Him must we look as our Example, that we may do as He has done; and as the Head in whom all our Springs are, that we may be encouraged, and strengthened with Strength in our Souls, that we faint not in the Day of

* Doth not he deservedly wander, and perish, who in War will neglect the Orders and Directions of his General, and attend unto every idle Tale of Men, pretending to shew him a Way that they have found out, better than that which his Captain hath limited him to? Dr. Owen, on *Heb. ch. 2. ver. 10.* p. 235.

of Trial, but may be able to hold out to the End, that we may be saved. *Thine, O Lord, is the Power, and the Victory*; and therefore we may not trust to our own Bow, or think our own Sword will save us; but we must go forth in the Name of the mighty God of *Jacob*, the Lord our Righteousness, in whom we have everlasting Strength. Whenever we are assaulted with Temptations, tho' we are diligently to use our utmost Strength and Skill to master them, yet we must call in the Help and Assistance of Jesus Christ our sole Commander; and as firmly rely thereon, and as intirely trust thereto, as if we used no Pains of our own; and thus stand still and see the Salvation of God. And if we are secure of His Assistance, we need not to doubt our obtaining the Victory; for then His Spirit will be ours, His Strength ours, His Victory ours, and this will render His Throne ours too.

And as we must thus fetch in all our Strength from Him, so must we receive the Rewards of the Victory as His free Gift, and not our own Deservings, or the Merit of our Performances. When He ascended up on High, He first received Gifts, and then bestows them upon the Children of Men; He received them, both of Grace and Glory, as the Fruit and proper Deserts of His Victory, that He might bestow them, upon all His Followers; not as merited by them, yet as beautiful Rewards, engaged to them by free Promise, upon their Fidelity to Him. And indeed, this alone is sufficient to take away all Pretensions to Merit, that the Victory is obtained, not by our own Strength, but by the Might and Skill of our supreme Leader; and therefore unto Him alone should all the Honour redound, while the Rewards are freely bestowed among His Soldiers. So that we must look to, and rely upon Him for our Pay, and be willing to receive it all as a free Donation at His Hands; especially the last and largest Distribution thereof, the high Honour of sitting with Him in His Throne,

Thus

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Thus let us be found manfully fighting the Battles of the Lord, and patiently wait till the Time of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord ; and in the mean while take the Encouragement, given us in the many Promises made to the Overcomer, in Rev. 2d and 3d Chapter. *To him that overcometh, says Christ, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God ; — He shall not be hurt of the second death ; — I will give him to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it ; — I will give him power over the nations, — and I will give him the morning star ; — he shall be cloathed in white raiment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels ; — I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out ; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God and my new name ; — I will grant to him to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

9 JU 64

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do His Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His Sight, thro' Jesus Christ ; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

F I N I S.

Bartholomew Kneeland
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